ESTTA Tracking number:

ESTTA1084997

Filing date:

09/28/2020

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	92025859		
Party	Defendant General Cigar Co., Inc.		
Correspondence Address	ANDREW DEUTSCH DLA PIPER LLP US 2000 AVENUE OF THE STARS SUITE 400 LOS ANGELES, DE 90067 UNITED STATES Primary Email: Andrew.Deutsch@dlapiper.com Secondary Email(s): David.Huff@dlapiper.com, mkrinsky@rbskl.com, joshua.schwartzman@us.dlapiper.com, john.nading@us.dlapiper.com 212.335.4880		
Submission	Defendant's Notice of Reliance		
Filer's Name	Andrew L. Deutsch		
Filer's email	Andrew.deutsch@us.dlapiper.com, Joshua.schwartzman@us.dlapiper.com, john.nading@us.dlapiper.com, Valerie.fadis@us.dlapiper.com		
Signature	/Andrew L. Deutsch/		
Date	09/28/2020		
Attachments	GCC NOR Ex. 25 Cigar Aficionado - February 2019 (Part 01) .pdf(5757231 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 25 Cigar Aficionado - February 2019 (Part 2).pdf(5678190 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 25 Cigar Aficionado - February 2019 (Part 03) .pdf(5695511 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 25 Cigar Aficionado - February 2019 (Part 04) .pdf(2113854 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 26 Cigar Aficionado - April 2019 (Part 01).pdf(5711356 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 26 Cigar Aficionado - April 2019 (Part 02).pdf(5662937 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 26 Cigar Aficionado - April 2019 (Part 03).pdf(5191363 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 27 Cigar Aficionado - June 2019 (Part 01).pdf(5735414 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 27 Cigar Aficionado - June 2019 (Part 02).pdf(5690389 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 27 Cigar Aficionado - June 2019 (Part 03).pdf(5748363 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 27 Cigar Aficionado - June 2019 (Part 03).pdf(5748363 bytes)		

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In the matter of Trademark Reg For the mark COHIBA Date registered: February 17, 19	•	
AND		
In the matter of the Trademark For the mark COHIBA Date registered: June 6, 1995		
EMPRESA CUBANA DEL CUBATABACO,		x : :
	Petitioner,	: Cancellation No. 92025859
v.		:
GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.,	,	: :
	Respondent.	:

EXHIBIT 25

TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE

cigar ficionado

THE GOOD LIFE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

www.cigaraficionado.com

TOP 25 ANNUAL

GEAN OF THE VEAN

WHICH IS THE WINNER?

PLUS 24 GREAT SMOKES FOR \$6 OR LESS

JIMMY DUNNE ON GOLF

E-SPORTS: THE HOT NEW BET IN VEGAS

SMOKING WITH DOLPH LUNDGREN

THE PERFECT HOME BAR

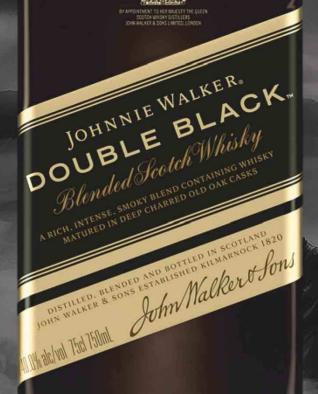


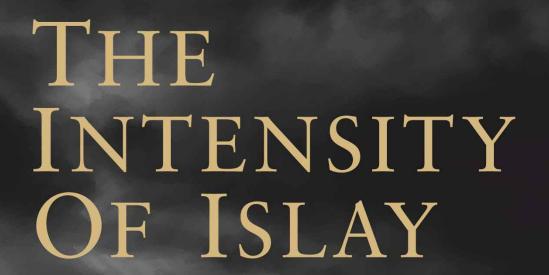












Crafted with a higher proportion of Islay malts and matured in deep-charred oak casks, Johnnie Walker™ Double Black™ is Johnnie Walker™Black Label™ with extra layers of smokiness.



JOHNNIEWALKER.COM

"AN INTENSE AND RICH PREMIUM BLEND WITH A SMOULDERING SPICINESS AND POWERFUL PEAT SMOKE FINISH. BOLD FLAVOR AND CLASSIC CHARACTER - THIS IS JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL REINTERPRETED WITH A NEW LEVEL OF INTENSITY"

Sui Burkdze

JOHNNIE WALKER MASTER BLENDER

The very creation of Johnnie Walker Double Black is proof that the pioneering spirit of our founder, John Walker, is still very much alive. Our blenders are always stepping boldly into the unknown, pushing boundaries and seeking new expressions while protecting the traditions passed down across generations. And at this very moment they have over 150 different live experiments underway.

When they sought to craft Johnnie Walker Double Black, they wanted to heighten the smoky flavors of the world's most popular 12 year old blend – Johnnie Walker Black Label. It was with great care that they selected mature, naturally smoky whiskies including Caol Ila® Single Malt from the misty isle of Islay, blending their flavors in deep-charred oak casks.

Johnnie Walker Double Black proves you don't stay ahead by standing still. This exciting blend is full-bodied and complex yet supremely smooth, with peat smoke swirling through hints of rich raisins, apples, pears, vanilla and oranges. With a warming and powerful spicy oak finish it is true testimony to the skill of our blenders who have invented a critically-acclaimed blend to take the flavors of Johnnie Walker into the 21st century.







PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

JOHNNIE WALKER DOUBLE BLACK Blended Scotch Whisky. 40% Alc/Vol. ©2019 Imported by Diageo, Norwalk, CT.

LEND THE INTENSITY OF ISLAY Crafted with a higher proportion of Islay malts and matured in deep-charred oak casks, Johnnie Walker™ Double Black™ is Johnnie Walker™Black Label™ with JOHNNIE WALKER. JOHNNIE WALKER. OUBLE BLACK. Blended Scotch Whisky Blended Scotch PREND COMPANIES WHISKY extra layers of smokiness. John Malkort Jons JOHNNIE WALKER KEEP WALKING. JOHNNIEWALKER.COM



















When you remember life's important moments, you'll remember a Padrón.

For decades, Padrón smokers have shared with us the stories of special moments in their lives that have been distinguished by smoking one of our cigars. Striving to create great cigars worthy of such special times is our singular motivation, those moments shared with family and friends. The Padrón Family thanks you for your continued loyalty and trust in the Padrón name.

www.padron.com

With knowledge



comes enjoyment.



ancionado

Magazines for people who are passionate.

TO SUBSCRIBE: goodlife.mshanken.com

PUBLICATIONS OF M. SHANKEN COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

#1 Cigar
Year
Year
2014



OF RESERVA LIMITADA

HILANICAN VRESERVA LIMITAN





The Oliva Serie V Melanio is hand rolled using expertly fermented ligero fillers, leaves known for their robust and rich flavor. This special cigar is sure to exceed a premium cigar smoker's highest expectations.

Blending Notes: The Serie V Melanio is full flavored yet smooth. The long filler tobaccos are a blend of Oliva Nicaraguan Habano that emphasizes tobacco from the Jalapa region, an area known for a more nuanced leaf than the Esteli or Condega regions. This carefully aged Jalapa blend produces a particularly flavored smoke.

COMPLEX / SMOOTH / BALANCED

Wrapper: Ecuadorian
Binder: Nicaraguan
Filler: Nicaraguan



For more information, visit us at www.olivacigar.com



contents

january/february 2019

up front

- 12 CIGAR HIGHLIGHTS
- 17 EDITORS' NOTE
- letters 19 OUT OF THE HUMIDOR
- the best 25 THE GOOD LIFE GUIDE
 - 27 GOURMET 1000 North is a dining haven for smokers.
 - 30 DRINK Amaro makes bitter sweet.
 - 33 CIGARS A lighter for all seasons.
 - 34 TIME The watch that came from outer space.
 - **36** ELECTRONICS Projection TV fulfills its promise.
 - 39 PLACES A jet-set ski destination gets a makeover.
 - **4I** STYLE Cuff links put your passion on your sleeve.
 - 44 SPORT Taking ping-pong seriously.
 - 46 COLLECTING The timeless appeal of model trains.

features

cover 50 TOP 25

Each year, we rate hundreds of cigars, but only one can be No. 1. We reveal the 25 very best cigars of 2018, as well as a list of the year's best buys.

golf 72 LIVING THE DREAM

Jimmy Dunne not only has a nonstop golf regimen played on a list of courses to spark anyone's envy, but the game saved his life.

gambling 80 WHEN THE MONEY'S ON MILLENNIALS

Wagering on eSports—the kind of games kids play on computers—is the fastest-growing segment in sports betting.

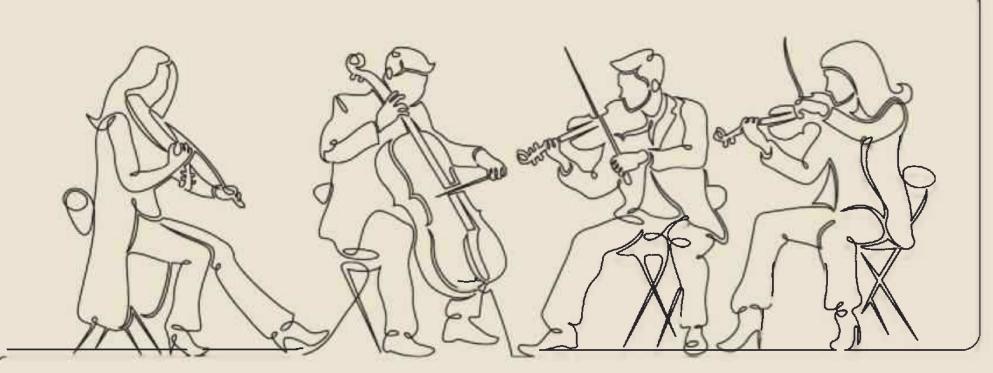






ON THE COVER
A trio of great smokes, three of our Top 25 cigars of 2018. photograph by Jeff Harris

QUARTET OF EXCELLENCE



Aging Room Quattro

Rafael Nodal is more than a cigar maker. He's the inspired composer of the Aging Room Quattro Series, a series of four boutique cigars for the sophisticated palate of an aficionado. Unique in flavor and rich in aroma, these cigars are born from the best tobaccos and aged under the expertise of one of the great names in cigar making.

Follow the music at:

@ @agingroomcigars

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Tobacco Use Increases The Risk Of Infertility, Stillbirth And Low Birth Weight.



drinks 89 RAISING THE BAR

A well-appointed cocktail station is the lynchpin of entertaining at home. We consider every budget from basic to bodacious.

cars 96 REGAL RIDES

Just call 2019 the Year of the Luxury Car. Carmakers have packed the high end with an array of new choices from sedans to eco-vehicles.

cigars

tasting 106 We rate 81 cigars in six sizes: Churchills

(106), corona gordas (108), figurados (112), panetelas (114), petit coronas (116), and robustos (118), plus our new Buying Guide (120) as well as our vintage cigar tasting, Connoisseur's Corner, (123).

profile 124 DOLPH LUNDGREN

The Swedish actor is back in his most familiar role. But this time the robotic Drago of *Rocky IV* has a human side.

tobacco 130 FLOURISHING IN FLORIDA

How two companies are endeavoring to reestablish tobacco growing in the once-dominant Sunshine State.

cuba report 137 THE RING-GAUGE RACE

Two decades ago, a Cuban cigar thicker than 50-ring-gauge was an anomaly. Today, hefty new Havanas are everywhere.

138 MOMENTS TO REMEMBER

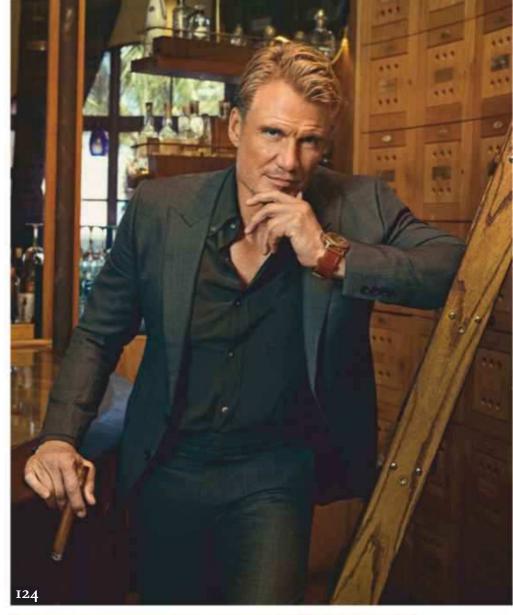
Photos from our readers as they enjoy themselves and their cigars.

143 LAS VEGAS BIG SMOKE

Nearly 4,000 people came to Sin City for CIGAR AFICONADO'S biggest event.

I44 MADE FOR YOU

The Uber of yachting; pocket humidors fit to show off; a London sartorial staple comes to New York; posh gaming tables; green motorcycles and a lush, leather weekend bag.







highlights

An impressive 35 of the 81 cigars rated in this tasting scored 90 points or higher. Nicaragua continued its dominance, as cigars made in the Central American country led three of the six size categories in this issue. Also, the top-scoring smoke, the Warped Serie Gran Reserva 1988, hails from Nicaragua.



TOP ROBUSTO

WARPED SERIE GRAN RESERVA 1988 ROBUSTO

NICARAGUA

04

Named for the birth year of owner Kyle Gellis, this Nicaraguan puro comes in one size only, a robusto measuring 5 1/4 inches by 50 ring gauge.



TOP CHURCHILL

FUENTE FUENTE OPUSX RESERVA D'CHATEAU

DOM. REP.

93

An all-Dominican mainstay powered by a shade-grown, Cuban-seed wrapper from the fertile fields of Chateau de la Fuente.



TOP PETIT CORONA

BOLIVAR CORONAS JUNIOR

CUBA

93

This tiny Cuban measures a mere 4 3/8 by 42, but still packs a big flavor punch that leads with Bolivar's signature earthiness.



TOP CORONA GORDA

PADRÓN FAMILY RESERVE NO. 45

NICARAGUA

92

One of Padrón's top brands, this toro from the Family Reserve tied with another Nicaraguan, the La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Reserva Beso.



TOP FIGURADO

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY WORK OF ART MADURO

DOM. REP.

92

Alluringly dark and curvy, this perfecto was made by the Fuente family with a near-black broadleaf wrapper grown in the Connecticut River Valley.



TOP PANETELA

VEGAS DEL PURIAL GRAN RESERVA LANCERO

NICARAGUA

 $C) \angle$

Enrobed in an Ecuadoran Sumatra wrapper, this skinny smoke tied with the Nicaraguan Laranja Reserva for the top spot in this category.



BEST BUY

ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET PUNK

HONDURAS

90

A short smoke with an inventive name, the Punk costs only \$5.95 and sports some Panamanian tobacco in its filler, a rarity in handmade cigars.



RARE FORM

THE LEXUS LS 500. LIVE IN THE NEW.

The LS 500 redefines what a luxury sedan can be With intense styling like the FSPORT bolstered 28-way power front seats featuring leather trim with an exclusive perforated L-motif design. The LS 500 is also powered by exhibitanting twin turbochargers, delivering 416 horsepower with a thrilling 4 6-second 0-60 time. And the Lexus Multistage Hybrid system in the LS 500h delivers seamless acceleration and torque, without requiring a charge. This level of



lexus.com/LS | #LexusLS



LS 500 FSPORT shown with options. 1. Ratings achieved using the required premium unleaded gasoline with an octane rating of 91 or higher. If premium fuel is not used, performance will decrease 2. Performance I gures are for comparison only and were obtained with prototype vehicles by professional drivers using special safety equipment and procedures. Do not attempt. ©2018 Lexus







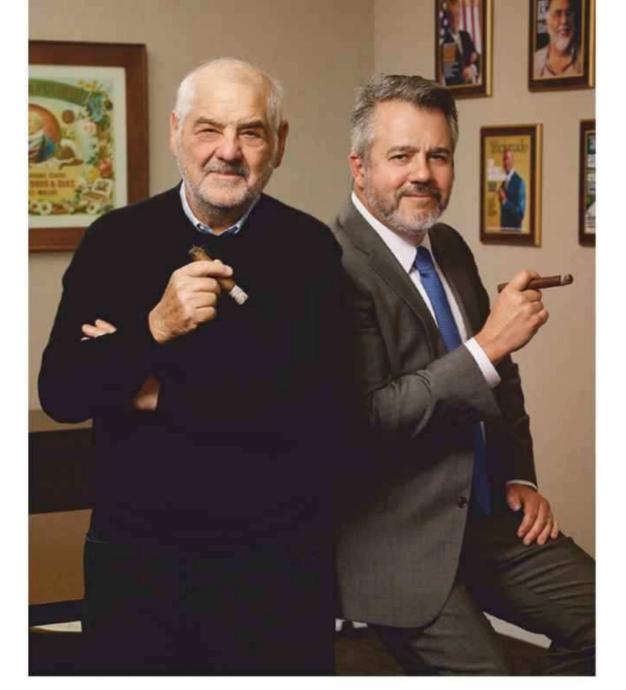
Clean Air Defined

Official air purifier of the International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers (IPCPR)



Effective. Quiet. Stylish. Air Purifiers
For a free catalog call
888.866.8862
www.rabbitair.com/smoke





editors' note

The Toughest Test

igar ratings are the bedrock of CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine. In this issue, they take center stage as we name the Top 25—the very best cigars of the year.

It's the toughest test a cigar will face, and it's a process that we take very seriously. We begin by assembling a list of the highest-rated cigars of the year from the pages of CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine and *Cigar Insider* newsletter, cigars that have already proven themselves in one blind taste test conducted by our panel of cigar-smoking editors. We then create a buy list and send our tasting coordinator out to purchase new versions of these cigars for more rounds of testing.

Once again, the cigars are smoked blind, which means they are stripped of their identifying bands, given a code and passed out to the tasting panel for judgment. We rate the cigar's construction, draw and burn, its appearance (the least important category) and its flavor. The best make our Top 25, and the very best go through an additional round to determine which should be No. 1.

The Top 25 rewards consistency and excellence, and this year's winner comes to you from a man who has made consistently excellent cigars for more than four decades: Ernesto Perez-Carrillo. His success story has a humble origin, as he originally worked alongside his father in a very small factory in Miami, selling cigars for a dollar or so apiece. One of those brands was named La Gloria Cubana. When CIGAR AFICIONADO was created in 1992, an early rating in the magazine for La Gloria Cubana transformed the brand from an unknown into a megahit, and Perez-Carrillo expanded, opening a much larger factory in the Dominican Republic to meet demand for the cigar.

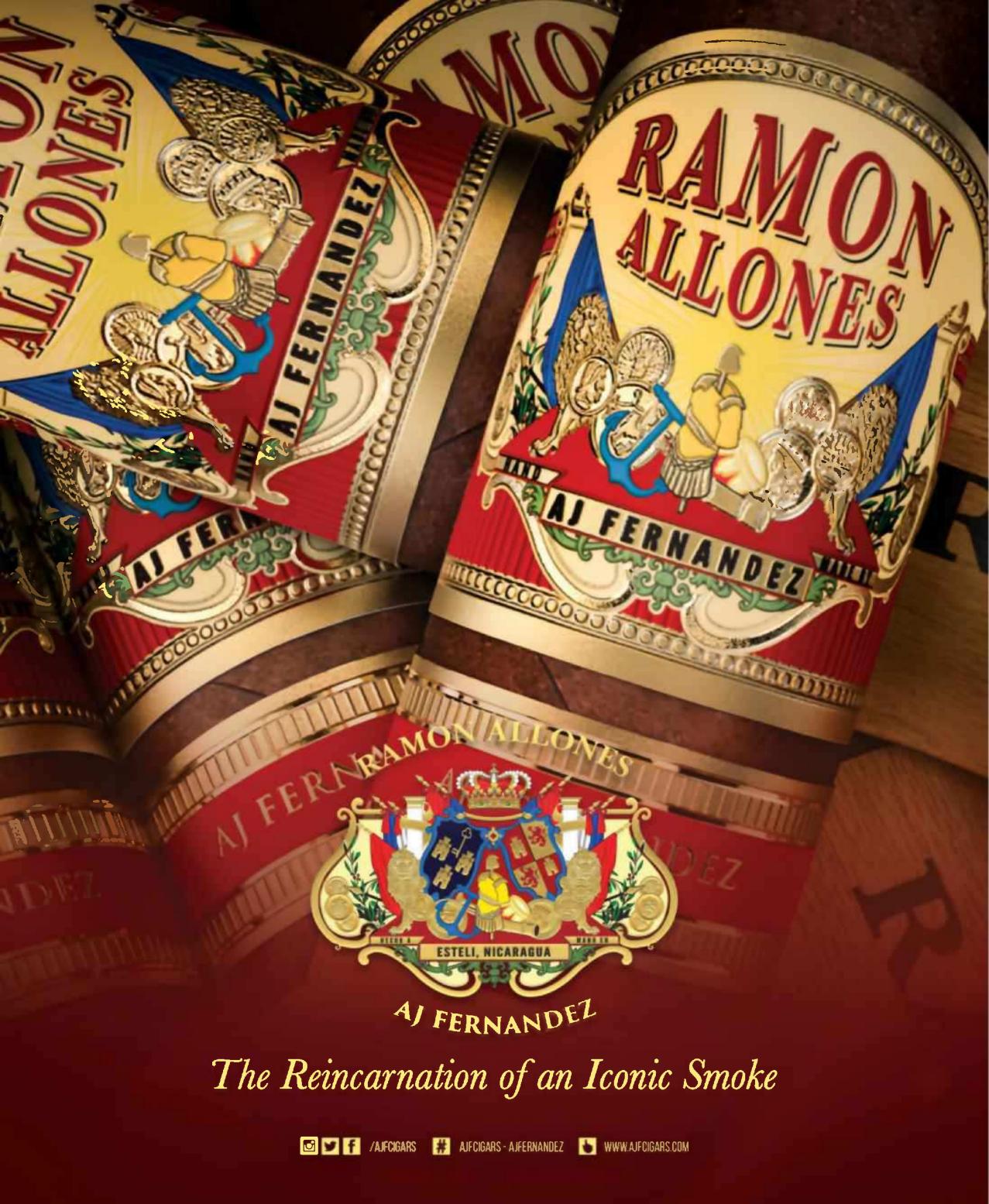
Perez-Carrillo has traveled quite the long road since those La Gloria Cubana days. He sold his company, worked for a large corporation for some time, then opened a new company with his children by his side. He kept on making great cigars—perhaps none finer than the E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic, the cigar that we named Cigar of the Year. Turn to page 50 to begin reading about all of our Top 25 cigars. (And don't forget to visit our website for videos of the editors smoking and discussing the best cigars of the year.) You'll see why all of these cigars are special, worthy of a spot in your humidor.

This issue is packed with stories for the cigar lover. You'll read about eSports, the hottest game in Vegas, which has attracted such A-list investors as Michael Jordan, Mark Cuban, Ashton Kutcher and Shaquille O'Neal. You'll read the incredible story of Jimmy Dunne, a financial man with an incredible roster of golf-club memberships, and how a round of golf literally saved his life. We'll show you what it takes to stock a perfect home bar, put you in the driver's seat in the newest cars heading to market and take you into a cigar bar with Dolph Lundgren, the action-movie star who was thrust back into the spotlight this winter. And you'll read all about a new leaf, grown in Florida by a cigar store megaretailer.

Enjoy the issue, and Happy New Year.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN EDITOR & PUBLISHER

DAVID SAVONA EXECUTIVE EDITOR



out of the humidor

Dear Marvin,

The article on the five small farms of Cuba was quite refreshing ["Cuba's Best Cigar Tobacco Farms," November/December 2018]. Although you will never hear Montecristo or the other big names say: "Oh, by the way, our No. 1 cigar was grown by someone else," at least when it comes to business, the Cubans know diversity can produce a better product. It's too bad ol' Fidel didn't apply this to politics. You also didn't mention if the farmers even own this land after generations of farming it. Eking out a living as a small tobacco farmer in Cuba can't be all that bad.

Jeff Herman Moline, Illinois

Editors' Response: While the specific situation of each farmer may vary, two of the most prominent Cuban farmers we spoke to—Hector Luís Prieto and Hirochi Robaina—own their respective fincas. The government still commands control over their production, but they are the owners of their properties.

Dear Marvin,

Your article on the best Cuban tobacco farms should be a special edition. Well played.

Luc Blanchard

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Dear Marvin,

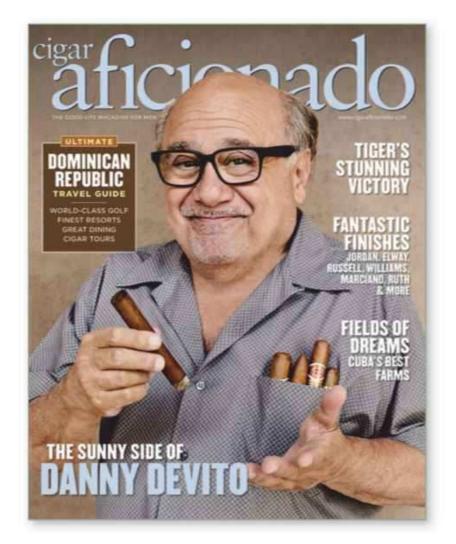
I have enjoyed your magazine for years and love the cigar rating and review sections. Will you be rating and reviewing infused or flavored cigars sometime?

I normally choose mild to medium-strength cigars.

Jerry Roy

Citrus Springs, Florida

Editors' Response: We don't rate flavored cigars in Cigar Aficionado magazine, for several reasons. Flavored cigars are made in a manner quite different from that of the handmade, premium cigars that we cover, which are made only with tobacco, water and time. Flavored cigars can't be stored next to traditional, handmade cigars because the



"The article on the five small farms of Cuba was refreshing. When it comes to business, the Cubans know diversity can produce a better product."

—Jeff Herman, Moline, Illinois

flavorings and infusions may taint the unflavored cigars. Frankly, we don't understand or appreciate adding flavors to a cigar. The cigars we smoke don't need flavoring. Call us purists.

Dear Marvin,

Your research on Bob Cousy's final game is flawed ["Fantastic Finishes," November/December 2018]. While you do recount his final game as a Celtic, that was not the end of his playing career. Couz was later a player/coach for the Cincinnati Royals, coaching Oscar Robertson, among other greats. Cousy's final game came at the age of 41, as he inserted himself during the final seconds of



Printed in the U.S.A.

A publication of M. Shanken Communications, Inc. Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10019 212/684-4224 fax: 212/684-5424 e-mail: letters@cigaraficionado.com

VOL. 27 NO. 2

Editor & Publisher MARVIN R. SHANKEN

Executive Editor Senior Features Editor Art Director Senior Editor Associate Editor Assistant Editor/Tasting Coordinator

Assistant Editor

JACK BETTRIDGE JOHN THOMPSON **GREGORY MOTTOLA** ANDREW NAGY DAVID CLOUGH **BLAKE DROESCH**

DAVID SAVONA

Senior Contributing Editor Contributing Editors

GORDON MOTT PAUL A. EISENSTEIN, MARSHALL FINE, LAURIE KAHLE, MICHAEL KAPLAN, LARRY OLMSTED, JEFF WILLIAMS

Photo Editor Associate Art Director Associate Art Director Designer Designer

TODD MILLER LISA AURIGEMMA HENRY ENG DIANA WITKOWSKI **Promotions Designer** LISA GEORGE Assistant Photo Editor KARISSA MAGGIO

CASEY OTO

Manager, Cigar Aficionado Online Production Associate, New Media Director of Digital Media Site Developer

ANDREW NAGY EDISON A. LEON JAMES LAPORTE ANURADHA UDYAVER

Senior Vice President, Ad Sales and Services Vice President/Associate Publisher Corporate Advertising

Director, Beverage/Alcohol Advertising Senior Account Manager, New Business Integrated Marketing Director Senior Account Directors, West Coast Account Manager, West Coast

Southeast Advertising Sales Detroit Advertising Sales Arizona Golf Advertising Sales Advertising Events Manager Sales Assistants CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY BARRY ABRAMS MIRIAM MORGENSTERN MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK **GEOFF MADDEN** KRISTIN IOHNSON LINDSEY B. RONALD, CHERYL LEWIS

PAULA COCHRANE WHEELER MORRISON, GREEN LEAVES MEDIA

JENNY JAIKARAN, MAGGIE KOTRABA

CHRISTINE ANDERSON STEVE BLIMAN JENNIFER ARCELLA

Vice President, Custom Media Advertising Services Manager New Media Coordinator

DON GATTERDAM CHRISTINA CHIAFFITELLA HILARY CHALSON

Director of Technology Lead Developer **Imaging**

MICHAEL TURRO RICHARD OWENS

SAMANTHA SAFFER, ELI HALPERN **Prepress** DAVE BOULANGER, ERIC CHEUNG

Senior Vice President, Events **Events Director** Senior Events Manager **Events Manager** Senior Vice President, Marketing and Circulation Senior Circulation Director

Assistant Circulation Manager

Senior Retail Sales Director

Retail Account Manager

Events Marketing Manager

Vice President, Production

Assistant to the Chairman

SUSANNAH NOLAN LISA GRIBBIN SHAUNTAY DUNBAR LAURA ZANDI PHYLICIA BEDOYA TINA RATWANI JEANNE HOLLY SHIREN FELICIEN LIZ MOTT

LYNN RITTENBAND

Chairman Vice Chairman Senior Advisor to the Chairman Senior Vice President Senior Vice President Senior Vice President Chief Financial Officer Vice President, Business Development

MARVIN R. SHANKEN MICHAEL D. MOABA MEL MANNION CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY LYNN RITTENBAND LAURA ZANDI STEVEN GORDON JESSICA SHANKEN KEVIN MULLIGAN SHEENA DELLANZO

Questions about your subscription? Call 800/365-4929 Questions about your retail sales account? Call 800/344-0763 a game only to lead to turnovers, which blew a lead and cost them the game. Not quite the glorious story you have told.

Richard Fridie Columbus, Ohio

Editors' Response: Cousy played 13 seasons (and more than 900 games) as a Boston Celtic. You're correct in that he did play after the Celtics; after taking six years off from the NBA, he played seven games of the 1969-1970 season. But Cousy's final game with Boston was a glorious exit from a brilliant career with that team, and one we felt worthy of inclusion in our story. He will forever be linked with that storied franchise.

Dear Marvin,

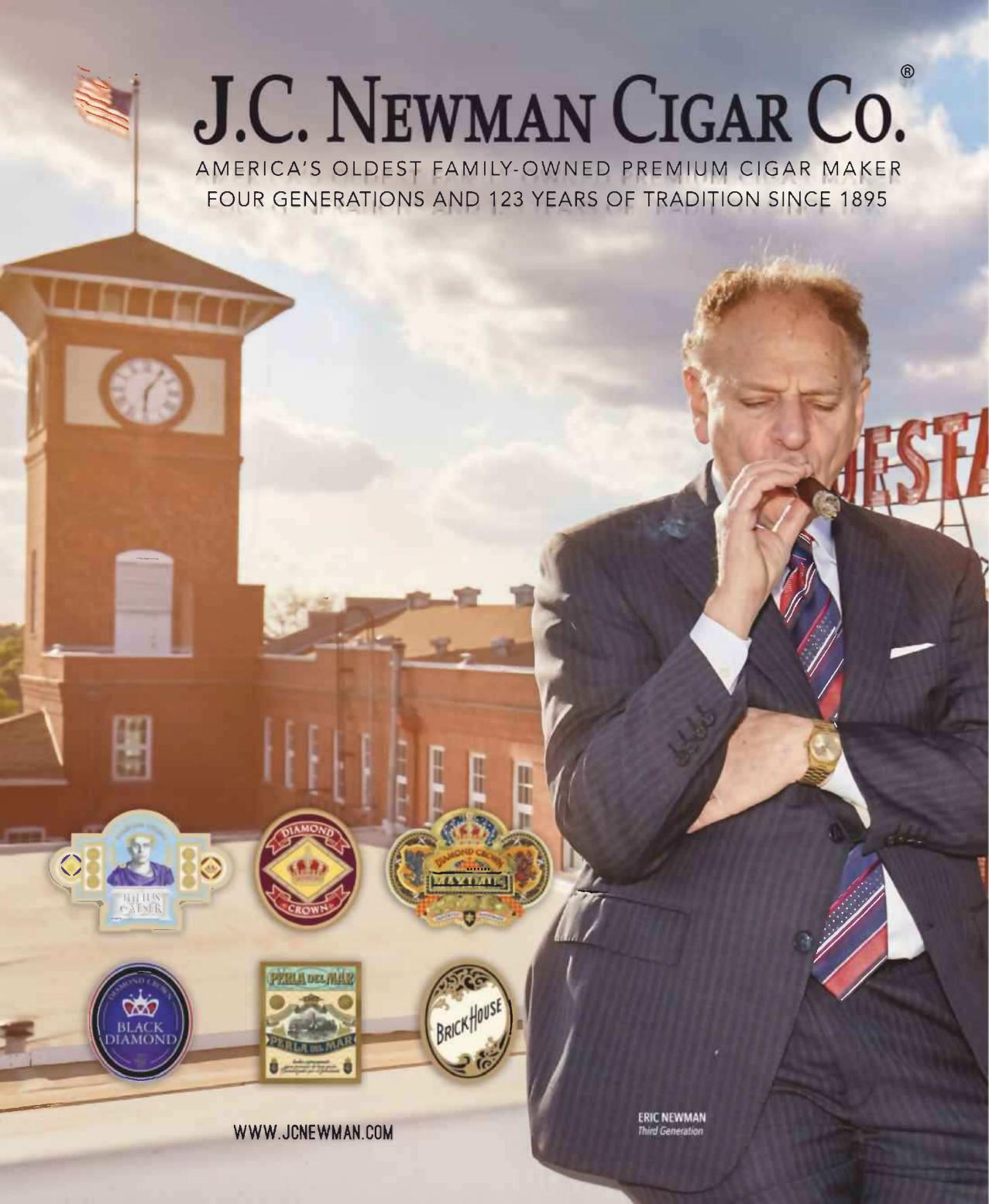
Your recent anniversary issue has got me thinking about your magazine and the role that it has played in my own cigar hobby. In particular, your "Good Life for Men" approach and what it means to me as a watch-the-budget, middle-class father of three has been at the forefront of my thinking lately. The lifestyle that you profile in your magazine seems hopelessly beyond my comprehension and offers a glimpse into a lifestyle that only previously existed for me in movies and obnoxious TV shows in which celebrities give tours of their homes.

The idea of spending a mortgage payment (or even the cost of my entire home) on a wristwatch seems as attainable as deciding to declare for the forthcoming NFL draft as a second career. In fact, the "Good Life" in your magazine seems to be a study in contrasts with my own day-to-day existence. Your luxury sports cars and sedans (my minivan), exotic golf excursions (my local public course on half-price tee days) and custom tailored clothing (me buying off-season clearance at the nearest department store) appeal to me much the same way as African animal documentaries I see on TV from time to time—interesting windows into a world I most likely will never experience.

So what then is the appeal of your magazine to a guy like me? The cigar. Even though I cannot afford even the most modestly priced "Good Life" accessories you frequently profile, I can scrounge up 10 to 20 bucks to enjoy a premium smoke, and this is what I see as the universal appeal of your publication. A cigar is a great equalizer. It doesn't matter who you are, how much you make, what you are wearing or what you drove up in. When you are smoking a great cigar, everyone is equal. That is a piece of "The Good Life" that everyone can enjoy and it is one that I am happy to share with the rest of your readers.

Aaron Rooks Kirksville, Missouri 🌣

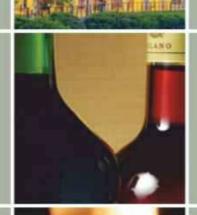




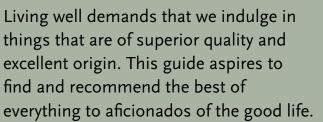








guide

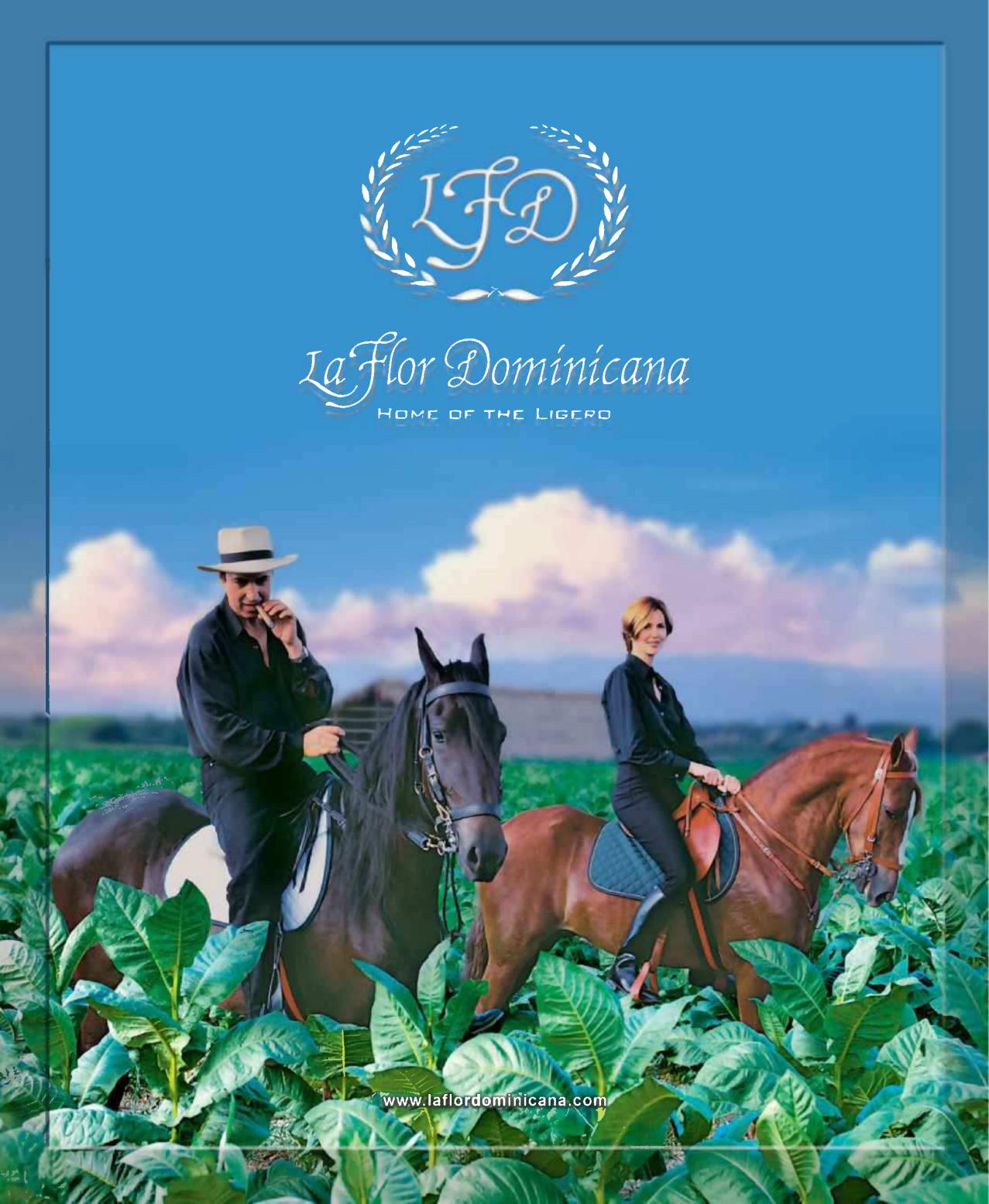




- gourmet 27 1000 NORTH
 - drink 30 AMARO
 - cigars 33 LE GRAND S.T. DUPONT
 - time 34 MB&F HM9 FLOW
- electronics 36 EPSON HOME CINEMA
 - places 39 cristallo, cortina d'ampezzo, italy
 - style 41 CUFF LINKS
 - sport 44 TABLE TENNIS MASTERY
 - collecting 46 Model Trains







1000 North

igar aficionados know restaurants that welcome smoking at the table have long been a vanishing breed. But 1000 North, a new, high-end dining establishment in Jupiter, Florida, is reversing that trend by putting out the welcome mat to cigar smokers with a spacious (and weathersheltered) outdoor area where smoking is allowed, and the restaurant has three humidors filled with cigars that will surprise and impress.

The restaurant, which opened in January 2018, has several well-known owners, among them Michael Jordan, Ernie Els, Justin Thomas and Marvin R. Shanken, the editor and publisher of CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine. Ira Fenton, managing partner of 1000 North, says the area was missing a fine-dining spot. "There was a demand," he says. "This is the golfing mecca of the Eastern United States. Within six miles of 1000 North there are over 10,000 members of private golf clubs."

The goal was to serve that clientele with superb food, wine and a place to enjoy a cigar. The restaurant's dining room, which has a dramatic, curved, wood-paneled ceiling, features all prime beef, fresh fish, pastas and poultry. "A diverse menu," says Fenton. The 12-page wine list has bottle prices that range from \$50 to the thousands, with several high-profile Bordeaux and Burgundies and one wine aging into its fifth decade, a 1975 Bertani Amarone (\$1,000). Two of the pages are dedicated to wines by the glass.

The cigar list at 1000 North has 10 selections (priced

from \$25 to \$50), including such standouts as the Padrón Serie 1926 No. 9, the Fuente Fuente OpusX Double Corona and the Oliva Serie V Melanio Figurado, all former Cigars of the Year.

You can smoke your cigar (and dine as well) on the terrace, which can seat some 80 patrons. The space was recently upgraded with a high-tech, rain-sensing pergola. When drops begin to fall, the slats of the pergola automatically close, keeping diners on the terrace dry. "We can keep it open 98 percent of the time," says Fenton. You can have a full meal on the terrace, or simply pair your cigar with an after-dinner drink.

The yacht-friendly 1000 North also has a 350-foot dock on the Loxahatchee River. Upstairs from the restaurant, there is a members-only club area, complete with its own cigar-friendly balcony.

Visit 1000north.com

—David Savona





VANILLA Coun Royal

SO GOOD







Amaro

ranslated from the Italian, its name is less than inviting: *bitter*.

But when amaro finds it way into a cocktail it becomes a pleasant surprise. What's more, many of these pungent liqueurs are quite friendly when enjoyed neat or on the rocks.

If the term is unfamiliar, it's not because amari (that's the plural) are so rare. One of the most popular examples in the world—Campari—is a key ingredient in the Negroni cocktail. But you won't find the word amaro on its bottle. Instead, Campari is labeled as an aperitif. That may be because the category is so loosely defined. Amari include before- and after-meal liqueurs (even, some say, vermouth) and may be made all over Europe and the United States. But the roots trace to the ancient Romans, who developed them as remedies from medicinal-tasting roots. Nevertheless, by the 19th century they were refreshing enough to be branded and bottled.

Their flavor spectrum is almost undefined. Amari like Averna, Nonino and Hungary's Zwack are nuanced blends of botanicals that may include anise, angelica, marjoram, cinnamon, cinchona,

gentian, rosemary, saffron, fennel and cardamom. Others have dominant flavors, like the artichoke in Cynar and the rhubarb in Zucca Rabarbaro. Alcohol level can also vary greatly—from 10 to almost 50 percent—as does sugar content. Aperol is almost a soda pop compared with the woody, rooty Fernet-Branca.

Predictably, the microdistilling movement in the U.S. has discovered its charms and is creating amari that reflect a sense of the place. Amaro Angeleno and Greenbar Grand Poppy, both from Southern California, smack of oranges and grapefruits respectively. The always-trendy San Francisco has become something of an amaro capital, with bars specializing in it, especially the challenging Fernet variety.

The choices may be wide, but don't confuse amaro with cocktail bitters, those concentrated tinctures that come in a tiny bottle and are used by the drop. Leave drinking those in volume to the millennials who indulge in cinnamon-eating challenges.

-Jack Bettridge

FOLLOW THE LEGEND TO NICARAGUA

Two legends coming together. The extraordinary legacy of Montecristo and the best tobaccos from Nicaragua blended in an exquisite 100 % puro cigar that honors crafting and World's most coveted leaves. A unique smoking experience

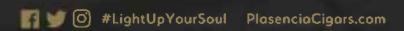
that reveals the power of the icon, the mystery of nature. 100% Pure Nicaraguan YONTECKISTO. NICARAGUA SERIES Follow the legend at: www.montecristo.com @ @montecristo_usa **SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Tobacco**

Use Increases The Risk Of Infertility, Stillbirth, And Low Birth Weight.





Perfected over 152 years, yours to enjoy now.







You've gone out for a day of leisure, provisioned with a few well-chosen cigars. When the wind picks up on the golf course, you need a torch lighter to ignite your smoke. But later, at the cigar bar, you find such pyrotechnics to be overkill. Different smoking conditions call for different lighters. Sometimes you want the gentle touch of a soft-flame lighter. At others, a powerful torch is the only answer. Roving smokers have the option of toting two lighters or compromising with one flame that is right only half the time. Or, with the Le Grand S.T. Dupont, they can arm themselves with a device that packs both flames and always provides the perfect toast to the tobacco.

Flick the cylindrical roller of the Le Grand and twin soft flames spring to life. Positioned side-by-side, they ensure maximum coverage for lighting even the thickest of cigars. When you instead push the roller up, the soft flames extinguish and the lighter switches gears to deliver a towering blue torch. Even with its dual functions, the Le Grand remains compact enough—at 2.59 inches

high by 1.54 inches long by 0.55 inches wide—for pocket storage. Slightly larger than the company's signature Ligne 2 lighter, Le Grand is crafted with the same eye-catching rectangular shape, flip-top lid and flint-spark ignition.

Once the soft flames are burning, you can switch to torch flame or toggle back and forth. In soft mode, the rabbit-ear flames offer wide coverage, gently lighting without scorching the leaves. If needed, the high-temperature torch flame can target and touch up troublesome uneven burns with pinpoint accuracy. As with all proper cigar lighters, both flames are fueled by butane.

Made in France, Le Grand S.T. Dupont has a solid brass core and is available in five finishes: Brushed Palladium (\$1,064, pictured), Palladium (\$1,295), Black Lacquer and Palladium (\$1,495), Blue Sunburst Lacquer and Palladium (\$1,586), and Sunburst Brown Lacquer and Gold (\$1,695).

Visit st-dupont.com

—David Clough

good life guide



MB&F HM9 Flow

T's as if the wingtip tanks and cockpits of a postwar jet merged with the dashboard of a chrome-laden cruising car from the '50s and landed on your wrist, where it morphed into a watch. It's not hard to trace the design origins of the MB&F HM9 Flow. Swiss creator Max Büsser, a self-proclaimed social outcast as a child, grew up immersed in sci-fi comic books, TV shows and movies, providing a fertile inspiration for fantastical watches. He dubs them "Horological Machines"—mechanical sculptures that also happen to tell time.

Büsser credits the roots of his latest creation to aerodynamic design of the late '40s and early '50s, specifically 1954's Mercedes-Benz W196, 1948's Buick Streamliner and the snub-nosed De Havilland Venom aircraft that patrolled Swiss airspace in the postwar era. It was a time when aerodynamic appearance might trump verification by wind-tunnel analysis. "Those cars or planes looked fast even when they were not moving," Büsser says.

Even those with the \$182,000 to afford it may have to stand in



line to strap that speedy look on the forearm. MB&F is producing but 66 pieces (33 in each of two versions). The Air has a dark movement beneath its domed crystals and the time is read on an aviator-style dial. The Road (pictured) features a rose-gold-plated movement and speedometer-style dial. Furthering the aerospace motif, both are housed in a massive, sculpted titanium case.

Visit mbandf.com

—Laurie Kahle



Epson Home Cinema

■ hose who remember the birth of home television projection also recall its expensive foibles. The three-lens console took up yards of real estate and delivered a fuzzy picture with dull colors unless professionally installed. In the meantime, the advent of digital streaming and 4K resolution has nothing but stoked the dream of a home experience to rival the movie theater. Now, fantasy meets reality with a new breed of affordable, compact units that project wow factor in big-screen dimensions.

An upper-echelon device like Epson's Home Cinema 4010 4K PRO-UHD Projector (\$1,999) casts video in razor-sharp quality with vivid colors. And, unless your house enjoys the dimensions of a Newport-style mansion, its picture will fill any room. The Epson projects on screens ranging from 50 to 300 inches wide. In comparison, top-of-the-line televisions tend to cap out at around 85, while multiplex screens are typically between 240 to 600.

Amateurs can set it up on a tabletop and adjust its focus in less than five minutes, but it's also equipped to be ceiling mounted in dedicated viewing rooms. The Epson has two HDMI ports, a USB port as well as a computer input, so you can stream, watch cable or a DVD, even play video games.

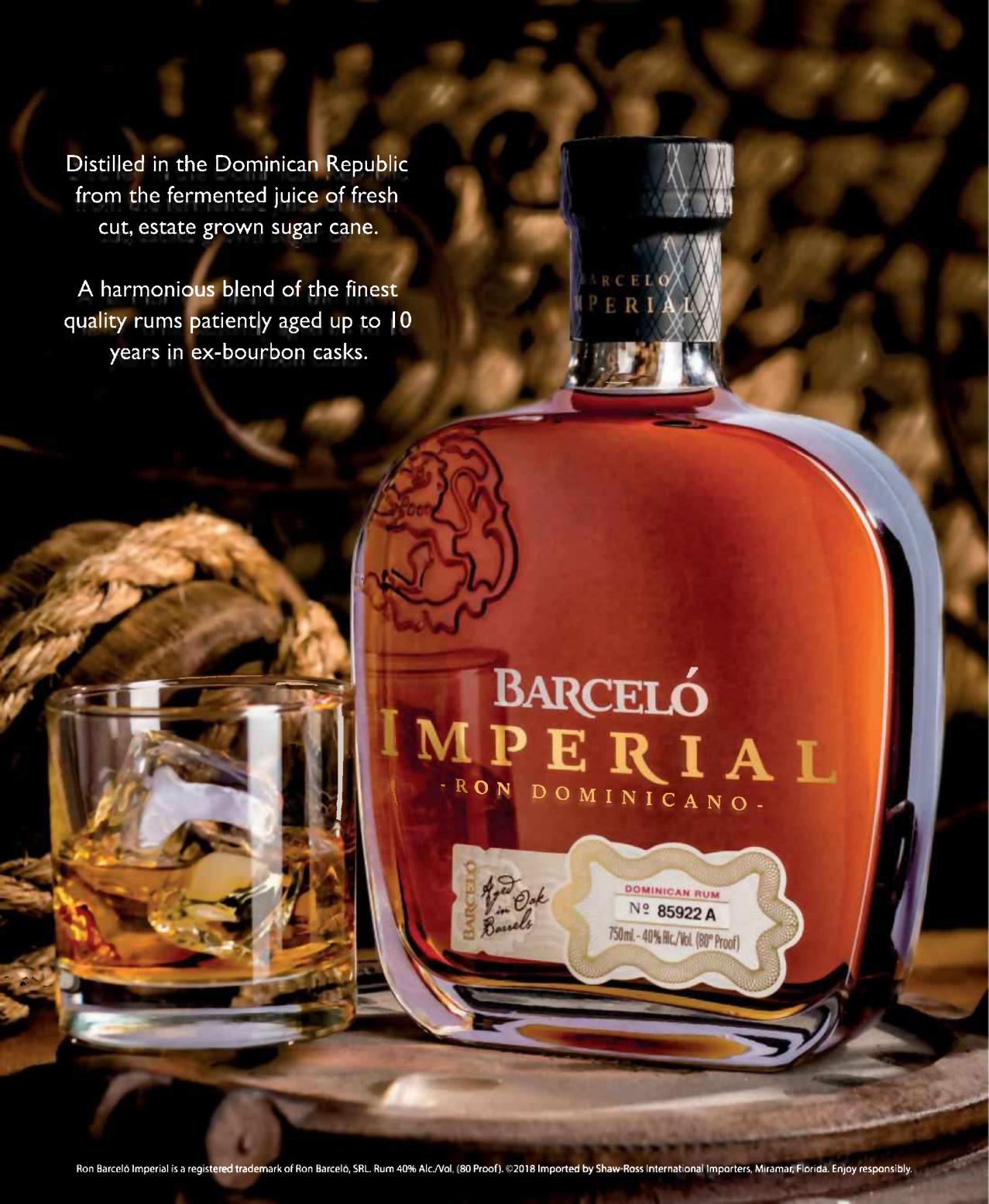
Experts caution that a projector is only as good as its screen so don't skimp there. You'll also have to supply a sound system. Whether it comes from surround sound or any one of the many capable sound bars, this picture deserves big audio.

The Epson's specs—2,400 lumens, a 200,000:1 contrast ratio will awe technophiles, but the convincer will come when your acrophobia kicks in while watching Batman glide off skyscrapers in *The Dark Knight*. Popcorn not included.

Visit epson.com

-Blake Droesch





Embark On The Hero's Journey.



MARNING: This product can expose you to chemicals including tobacco smoke, which is known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov. Smoking cigars causes lung cancer, heart disease, and emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy. WARNING: Cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes.









Cristallo, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy

ou may recognize Cortina d'Ampezzo as the impeccably chic alpine destination that attracted jet-setters, jewel thieves and a clueless police inspector in the 1963 film *The* Pink Panther. Today, it's an under-the-radar resort town in an extensive ski network that just got a \$100 million upgrade to go with the recent renovation to the Cristallo, where Peter Sellers resided between takes as Inspector Clouseau.

The craggy peaks of the Dolomites, shifting from gray to pink with the light, surround the charming village. This season, the enormous Dolomiti Superski zone, covering 12 ski resorts and nearly 800 miles of runs, has new cable cars and lifts, slopes and snowmaking equipment. Largely geared for beginner and intermediate skiers, it also provides plenty of black-diamond slopes and the options to heli-ski or go off-piste.

Area heritage includes the World War I era, when it saw intense fighting (the remnants of which can be toured on skis), and the 1956 Winter Olympics. The hotel itself was founded in 1901 as The Palace Hotel. Recently, it became part of the Luxury Collection of the Marriott, with a renovation that refreshed its 74 rooms and 20 suites. Some have balconies and breathtaking mountain views. The décor evokes a luxurious chalet with light-wood paneling, parquet floors, and hand-painted floral decorations contrasted with crystal chandeliers and faux fur throws.

The Cristallo's wood-paneled La Stube 1872 restaurant conjures a mountain cabin with its antique majolica stove and a menu that celebrates local dishes that fuse Tyrolean and Italian influences. Casunziei all'ampezzana is a beetroot and potato ravioli tossed in butter with sage and poppy seeds. House-made pork sausages are paired with polenta and mushrooms, and the dessert specialty is a delectable apple strudel.

At the elegant Il Gazebo, you can sample degustation menus and seasonal gastronomy cultivated by executive chef Marco Pirelli. After dinner, visit the humidor in the Lounge Bar and head out to the terrace for a smoke.

Visit the-luxury-collection.marriott.com

–Laurie Kahle



Simply The Best.











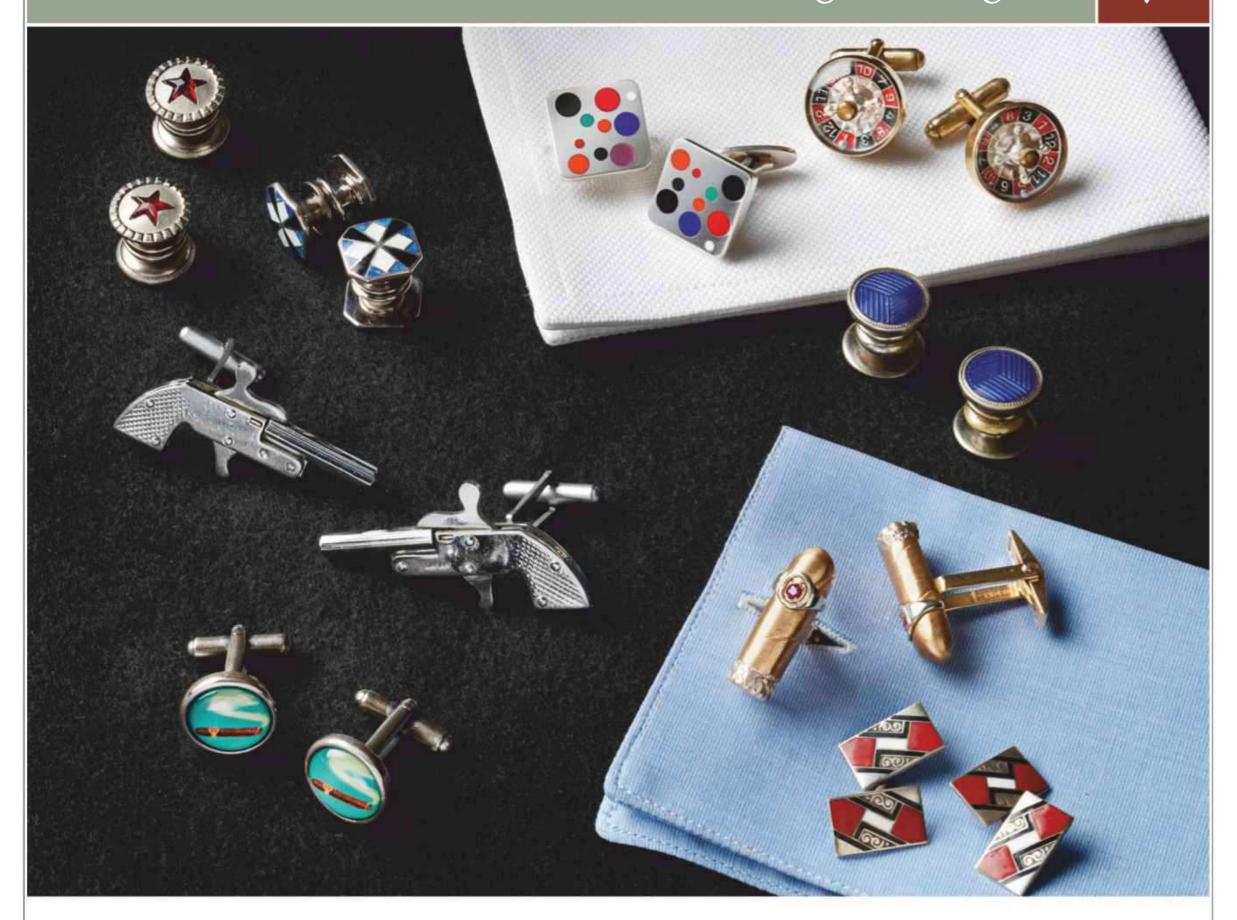
Churchill 7 x52



Antwersario 1965

www.madalaco.com





The Missing Link

hey say follow your passion, and Michael Rodriguez, once a paralegal, did just that, turning his cuff link collecting into The Missing Link, a New York City shop with 20,000 pairs. Most are vintage, and some have even been in the spotlight, featured on television's "Mad Men" and "Boardwalk Empire."

The charm of novelty cuff links, says Rodriguez, is wearing your passion on your sleeve. Of course, we were driven to the cigar theme illustrated by the 1950s Dolan & Bullock links in 14K gold with ruby insets (pinned to the blue cuff, bottom right, \$1,450) and a set with inlaid cigar images circa 1980 (bottom left, \$75). Rodriguez also has what he calls "doers," links that perform a function. Examples include the 1950s Austrian roulette wheels at upper right that actually spin (\$185) and working cap guns from the '50s (middle left, \$245), certain to pep up a boring meeting.

Links also follow design periods. Rodriguez has merchandise dating back to the late Georgian period of the 19th century and spans the Victorian and Edwardian eras as well. His specialty is the art deco period, as seen in the enameled sterling rectangles from Germany (lower right \$525). The enameled "Gumdrops" design from Georg Jensen captures a pop art aesthetic from the '60s (middle top, \$850). The Kum-A-Part brand of the 1920s made double-sided links that snap together (red star, upper left, \$175; plain blue, middle right, \$495; blue with design, upper left, \$595).

While a dressing-up trend is currently bolstering links, Rodriguez says his business has always been good. "I hate to use the word resurgence, because I've always been into them."

Visit missinglinknyc.com

—Jack Bettridge













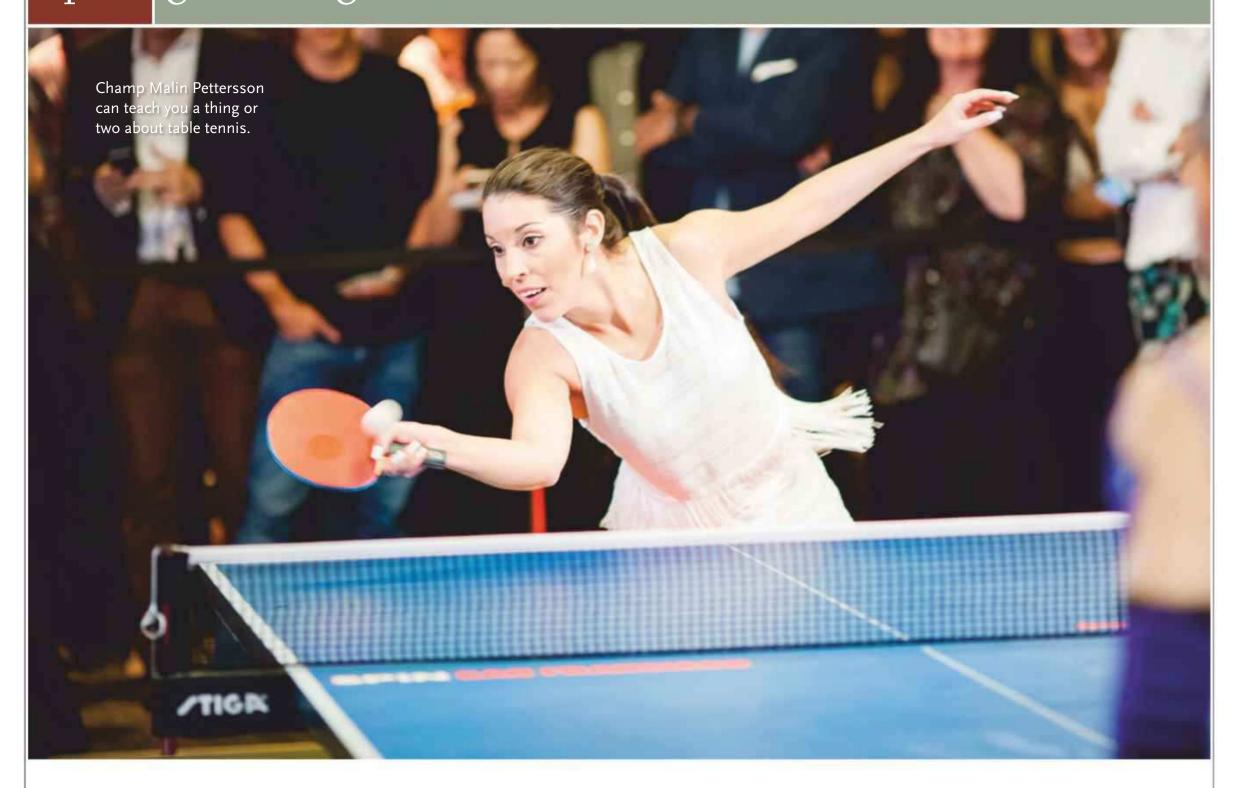


Table Tennis Mastery

n one moment, I had thought of table tennis as a pedestrian pursuit: fun, but with an easy learning curve that allowed you **L** to make contact and win points in no time—nothing like the self-loathing that comes with developing a graceful tennis swing. Then I faced a barrage of celluloid spheroids, smashed with a mix of wicked pace, treacherous spin and impossible-to-defend placements. And my view of ping-pong changed forever. Being schooled by a 14-time Swedish table tennis champion will do that to you.

I happened to be at the mercy of Malin Pettersson at SPiN, a hip Chelsea ping-pong bar, because I was somehow scheduled to play the tennis great Rafael Nadal at an upcoming cocktail party in his honor. Despite my low estimation of the game, I thought it prudent to take a lesson with a master.

Rafa, who sometimes unwinds in the locker room playing table tennis, had a more realistic view: "It's not very difficult at the beginning to hit the ball," he says. "That's why everybody thinks they can play well. But when you play with somebody who really practices it's impossible."

Tell me about it. The modest Pettersson allowed me to believe I possessed natural talent as I smashed balls right and left.

She even let me win a few points. But I wasn't there for ego stroking. I asked her to turn it on like she would in a tournament. I watched helplessly as plastic projectiles flew by at dizzying speed.

My lesson in humility did, however, include a few helpful tips such as: move your feet (table tennis is a real sport, not a variation on beer pong); and for better placement and control hold the racquet as if you were shaking hands with it—your forefinger on the back of the paddle—rather than wrapping your hand around it like a tennis racquet.

Finally, supreme self-confidence can't hurt. Ms. Pettersson said she frequently plays men who assume they can defeat her. "I'm sure Nadal would think he could beat me," she boasted. "No way."

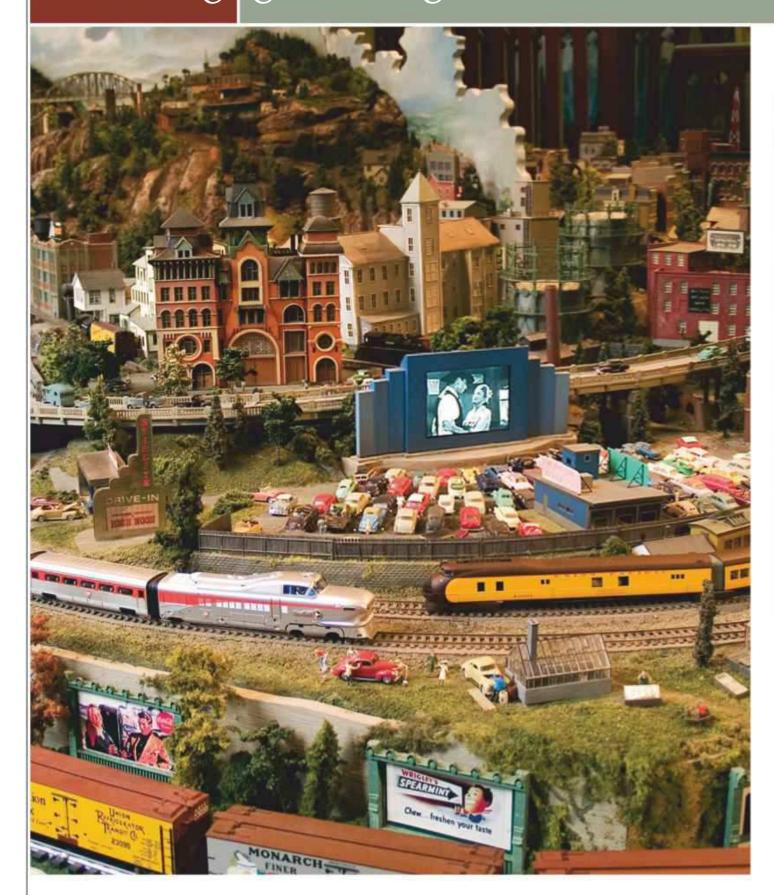
She was right. She agreed to accompany me to my game and served as a human backboard in a spirited doubles match against Rafa and his uncle and former coach Toni Nadal. We didn't keep score, but the clear winner was Pettersson. And for the rest of us, the consolation prize was a newfound respect for a game that's a lot deeper than it seems.

Visit wearespin.com

−Ralph Gardner Jr.



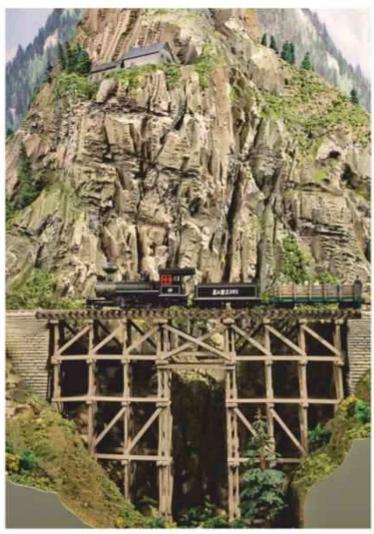
collecting good life guide





black locomotive with the white lettering "New York Central" hurtles around a bend of track. Passenger cars pursue their leader into a tunnel. Puffs of smoke spurt from the locomotive in time with the chugging engine. Both kids and adults are glued to the display at the Train Station store in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey.

"Eighty percent of the male population has a fascination with trains," says store owner Dave Shaw. "[They] bring back people's childhood-everyone is chasing that lifelong memory." It's been that way since such firms as Lionel first powered model trains with electricity—as opposed to wind-up mechanisms—around the turn of the 20th century. Shaw says that collectors tend to concentrate on trains from their own locale, chosen from such memorable lines as the Union Pacific, the New Haven, and the most famous of all, the Santa Fe, with its warbonnet color scheme



Custom layouts by Dunham Studios.

(red and silver with a yellow stipe). "I'm in the New York area, so I like New York Central."

Shaw also custom builds layouts that begin at \$5,000, fully furnished with trains, track and scenery. But some climb to \$100,000 and require an addition to the owner's house. If that sounds excessive, consider Dunham Studios. Clarke Dunham's career segued from designing Tony Award-nominated stage sets into model trains after he was asked to install an 8,000-squarefoot layout in the atrium of New York's Citibank. When it was seen by 141,000 people, orders started to pour in from private citizens and

museums. Now his opening price is \$100,000 and can easily surpass a half million. The company's staff includes an electrician, a light designer, a computer-graphic designer, model makers and carpenters. Its layouts, which represent 10 to 12 layers of complexity, can be built on multiple tiers with several themes. Artistic backdrops run from city skylines to panoramic landscapes. One customer ordered a layout to trace his career from railroad executive to oil tycoon to hotel owner.

While nostalgia is great inspiration, Dunham reports that one of the newest wrinkles in model railroading is controlling the trains by mobile phone apps—a development he's not so sure about: "There's still something special about having your hand on the knob of a transformer."

Visit dunhamstudios.com and train-station.com

-Kenneth A. Shouler

TWO SPECIAL CIGARS, TWO WRAPPER SHADES.



MADE IN THE USA IN LIMITED QUANTITIES



havanacellars.com





THE VERY BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR, TESTED BLIND BY OUR PANEL OF EDITORS

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA | PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

or even a great cigar. Draw and combustion have to be flawless, flavors need to be varied and appealing and the overall qualities must be uniquely resonant. Many cigars we smoke throughout the year fit that criteria, but there's one very important quality that many cigars lack—consistency. And that's what CIGAR AFICIONADO'S annual Top 25 list strives to bring you: a selection of not only the year's finest performers, but the handmade cigars that could repeat the stellar performance over and over again.

The Top 25 list is strictly performance based. It's not a popularity contest or a lifetime achievement award, but a tournament where the highest-scoring cigars of the year have to prove themselves once again in an entirely new series of blind tastings. In the end, these 25 cigars were the most worthy of being on this list, and one took our highest accolade—Cigar of the Year.





Honey-sweet spices, oak-wood and hints of salt-air.

The smooth finish and gentle flavors of our whisky come from an unhurried process. Patience is our most important ingredient.



PRONOUNCED OH-BIN.

OBAN

E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic

It's difficult to talk about the E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic without mentioning the man behind the brand. Ernesto Perez-Carrillo is a cigarmaker who has been through many phases in the cigar industry, a man who reinvented himself several times throughout his long career.

He started as a disinterested employee in his father's small, struggling cigar business in Miami. It was called El Credito Cigar Co. and produced a few hundred thousand cigars per year for locals in Little Havana. Then, in 1976, when his father was about to sell the business, Ernesto had a nagging instinct that told him he was making a mistake. The sale was canceled. His father died in 1980 and Perez-Carrillo took over the company, putting much of his effort behind a brand called La Gloria Cubana, which became one of the hottest cigars of the 1990s.

The brand got the attention of General Cigar Co., which purchased La Gloria in 1999. Perez-Carrillo worked with General for a decade, before leaving to reinvent himself once again, creating EPC Cigar Co. in 2009 with his children.

Since opening his own factory in the Dominican Republic, Perez-Carrillo has released a good amount of brands, some more successful than others, but none as brilliant as the E.P. Carrillo Encore. He has

long worked with Nicaraguan leaves, but Encore marks the first time he's ever made a cigar solely using Nicaraguan tobaccos. Astute retailers might remember that he first previewed the Encore at the IPCPR tradeshow in 2016, but Perez-Carrillo didn't think the wrapper was quite ready, so—going with his gut once again—he decided to put the cigar on hold and give the wrappers more time to age, almost two more years. It wasn't until last March that he felt the cigars were finally ready. The decision paid off.

The Encore's rose-gold band may look familiar, as it's the same one found on 2014's La Historia, only in a different color. As the name suggests, this cigar is the "encore" performance to La Historia. Both bands have the image of Perez-Carrillo family members, including Ernesto's daughter Lissette, who is heavily involved in the company.

The filler tobaccos deep inside are from Nicaragua's three primary growing regions—Estelí, Condega and Jalapa—and all of it comes together in the Majestic, a robusto of immaculately detailed flavor that ranges from oak and tea to caramel sweetness with tangy citrus pops of candied orange peel. It's elegant, refined and nuanced from first puff to last, but is also the culmination of a long career in tobacco and the result of a man who was never afraid to follow his instincts.

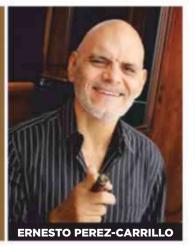




PRICE \$11.50

MADE BY Tabacalera La Alianza S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER Nicaragua
BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 5 3/8" by 52





My Father La Opulencia Toro

The My Father La Opulencia blend is a marriage of two opulent tobaccos with splendid provenance—Mexican and Nicaraguan. The wrapper is a dark Mexican San Andrés that the company calls Rosado Oscuro. There are two Nicaraguan binders underneath, one Corojo and one Criollo, both of which bolster the body of the cigar. And then there's the filler, a combination of Cuban seed tobaccos grown by the Garcia family, owners and makers of the My Father brand. The Garcias have a number of farms in Nicaragua, and La Opulencia shows off the quality of the leaves grown on these tobacco plantations, known as El Pedrero, Las Lometas and La Bonita.

This isn't the first time the Garcias have experimented with the Mexico-Nicaragua combination, but My Father La Opulencia is the most refined version of this blend, combining body, complexity and a stellar appearance. It's neatly box pressed and adorned with a secondary band that reads "La Opulencia," as this line is an offshoot of the core My Father series of cigars.

The tobaccos play off each other in interesting ways. The combustion is perfect, the draw offering earthy underpinnings of chocolate and cocoa with each puff, balanced by a mid-palate oakiness and sweeter, subtle top notes of anise and nougat. And this cigar evolves, getting stronger incrementally as the flavors gradually gain intensity. It's another top effort from the Garcias, who have won Cigar of the Year two times.

95 POINTS

MADE BY My Father Cigars S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua
WRAPPER Mexico
BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 6" by 54
PRICE \$11.80





The Wise Man Maduro Robusto

Remember the name Nick Melillo, for his star is rising among consumers and cigar fans. He used to be a behind-the-scenes guy at Drew Estate, but in 2015, he went off on his own to form Foundation Cigar Co. in his native Connecticut. He now has a growing portfolio of brands, none better than this dark and earthy smoke called The Wise Man Maduro. While there's certainly no shortage of dark, box-pressed cigars loaded with Nicaraguan tobacco, we were particularly impressed with this one.

The Wise Man Maduro Robusto has all the qualities of a stand-out cigar: assertive without being aggressive, full-bodied without being too strong and interesting from first puff to last. It's a flavorful blend that oscillates between the sweet and the savory. Cocoa and vanilla notes, for example, play off the tobacco's meaty, beef-stock qualities, all integrated by an ever-present earthiness.

The cigar is a blend of Nicaraguan binder, Nicaraguan filler (both grown by Aganorsa, the company that makes the cigar for Melillo) and Mexican San Andrés wrapper.

If you look closely at the band, you'll see the words "El Güegüense" printed in smaller letters. That's because The Wise Man Maduro is an offshoot of the original El Güegüense, which loosely translates to "the wise man" and is named for a folkloric dance in Nicaragua. It's a nice nod to the culture, but not a name that American smokers can necessarily relate to. For the maduro version, Melillo put the English name up front, causing far less confusion in the humidor. Wise move.

95 POINTS

MADE BY Aganorsa Leaf

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Mexico

BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 5 1/2" by 50

PRICE \$10.50



CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; GARCIA: DAVID BECKER/GETTY IN

Padrón Family Reserve No. 44 (Natural)

Is it any surprise to see a Padrón cigar in the top five position of CIGAR AFICIONADO'S Top 25? The company's cigars have been named Cigar of the Year a record three times, and have always appeared on the upper echelons of the list—and why shouldn't they? Padróns are loaded with aged Nicaraguan tobacco full of flavor, aroma and resonance.

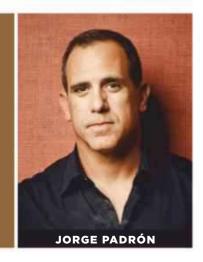
Take for example this Padrón Family Reserve No. 44, the first in the series of Family Reserve cigars. When it was created in 2007, it was only available at select Padrón events where a family member was present (hence the name of the brand). There was obviously something special about the cigar. Eventually, the Padróns decided to release the blend commercially, albeit in very limited quantities and at quite a high retail price. The number 44 represents the company's 44th year in business, which it celebrated in 2008.

Padrón cigars tend to have a few signature gustatory qualities, like chocolate, coffee and nuts. The Family Reserve No. 44 is no different. Its tapered torpedo head concentrates and magnifies these flavor elements, all of which are dynamic and refined, but also rich without being too heavy or overpowering. Great cigars are a hallmark of this family-owned cigar company, but so is consistency. Chances are, the first cigar you light up from a box of Padróns—any box—will be just as fantastic as the last.

95
POINTS

MADE BY Tabacos Cubanica S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua
WRAPPER Nicaragua
BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 6" by 52
PRICE \$32.10



5

H. Upmann Sir Winston



One of the last Cuban Churchills in the Habanos S.A. portfolio is the H. Upmann Sir Winston. It doesn't seem right that such a classic format has been deleted from almost every Cuban brand, but the trend is leaning towards fatter, shorter cigars. We at CIGAR AFICIONADO have lamented this tragedy before, but there's no sense in wasting too much time on what's been lost. Rather, let's focus on the Sir Winston, which was the finest, most consistent Cuban cigar we smoked all year. It's dimensions, 7 inches by 47 ring gauge, are nearly perfect. It's thick enough to deliver ample smoke, thin enough to fit comfortably in your mouth and long enough to give you at least an hour of pleasurable smoking. It's medium bodied, making it approachable for beginners but complex enough for more experienced smokers. The cigar is brimming with refined chocolate, marzipan, floral notes and a sweet, graham cracker finish, all brought together by that unique, inimitable Cuban taste.

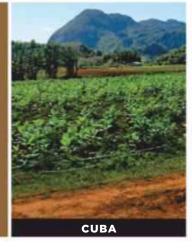
The size is known as a Julieta No. 2 in Cuban cigar factories, and was a favorite of Winston Churchill, perhaps the most famous cigar smoker in history. He consumed so many Julieta No. 2 cigars that the grand and elegant size was eventually named after him. It's only proper that the H. Upmann Sir Winston happens to be a Churchill.

94 POINTS

MADE BY Habanos S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Cuba
WRAPPER Cuba
BINDER Cuba
FILLER Cuba
DIMENSIONS 7" by 47

PRICE £32.91



CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; PADRON: JEFFERY SALTER; CUBA: ISTOCKPHOTO

6

Arturo Fuente Hemingway Work of Art

Cameroon tobacco may not be the trendiest wrapper in the cigar world. And little perfectos aren't the trendiest sizes in the market either. But none of this seems to bother Carlos Fuente Jr., owner of Arturo Fuente Cigars. Year after year, he unapologetically creates perfecto after perfecto in his Hemingway series and unabashedly wraps them in Cameroon—sweet, spicy, tasty Cameroon. While the perfectos in the Hemingway series range in size, we had particular affection for the Work of Art, a charming little smoke with considerable curves and tapers. It's one of the smaller models in the line (though not the smallest) but it's very big on flavor.

Perfectos like this one are difficult to make, and in the 1980s they were few and far between. After coming across some old perfecto-shaped cigar molds, Fuente was intrigued and decided to start producing these shapely cigars. The first Hemingways came to market in 1983.

The Work of Art was a later addition to the line, and like all perfectos its combustion can be a bit slow in the beginning, as it takes a little while for the tapered, bulbous foot to fully light. But once the burn gets going, the cigar really loads the palate with nutty, toasty smoke before blossoming with baking spices, citrus notes and the sweet-and-spicy properties that Cameroon wrapper is known for.



JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano

When the JFR line came onto the cigar scene in 2005, it was intended to be sold only in retail shops. The letters J, F and R stand for Just For Retailers. The JFR Lunatic is an extension of the original JFR line and brought to us by Aganorsa Leaf.

Released in 2014, Lunatic was so named because, according to Aganorsa, "You need to be a little crazy to smoke these cigars." Some of the cigars in the line are rolled as thick as 80 ring gauge. Crazy? Maybe a little extreme perhaps, but the JFR Lunatic Short Robusto seems to be a much more rational approach to smoking, with a ring gauge of 52 that's outright slender by comparison.

The brand is produced at Aganorsa Leaf (formerly known as the TABSA factory) in Estelí, Nicaragua. Besides the Ecuador Habano wrapper, all of the tobacco in Lunatic comes from Aganorsa, an agricultural conglomerate that owns and operates an impressive collection of tobacco plantations throughout Nicaragua. Both the factory and the growing operation are owned by Eduardo Fernández.

The cigar is profoundly nutty (no pun intended) with precise notes of cashew and walnut wonderfully layered atop a core of coffee bean. At less than \$6 per cigar, the only thing insane here is the price.

94 POINTS

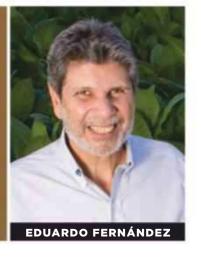
MADE BY Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.

FACTORY LOCATION Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER Cameroon
BINDER Dom. Rep.
FILLER Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS 4 7/8" by 60
PRICE \$9.65



MADE BY
Aganorsa Leaf

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua
WRAPPER Ecuador
BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 4 3/4" by 52
PRICE \$5.98



CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; FUENTE: JEFFERY SALTER



There's No Other Magazine Like It—In The World

Visit CigarAficionado.com to Subscribe



Oliva Serie V Melanio Churchill

The Oliva Serie V Melanio blend is no stranger to our Top 25 list. In 2014, the Figurado was Cigar of the Year and in 2016, the Robusto was No. 8. Today, the Churchill lands at No. 8 as well, which really speaks to the consistency of this blend. On the inside is a core of Nicaraguan binder and filler tobaccos, but the driving force of its character is undoubtedly the aged Ecuador Sumatra wrapper.

The Melanio blend is the top-tier product from Oliva Cigar Co., made in even lower quantities than its traditional Serie V brand. The smoke was named after Melanio Oliva who, according to the family history, was the first member of the Oliva family to grow tobacco, circa 1886.

Oliva cigars have remained remarkably consistent over the years, scoring well again and again in our blind tastings. But when Oliva was acquired in 2016 by European company J. Cortès, there were, naturally, concerns: quality could suffer in favor of increased production, prices could increase or any number of negative changes associated with an acquisition could transpire. After two years in the hands of J. Cortès, we're happy to say that Oliva cigars remain a fantastic product with consistency and complexity.

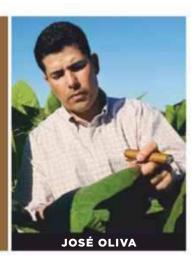
The Serie V Melanio Churchill is as aromatic as it is flavorful, with notes of malted chocolate and mesquite that occur in both the nose and on the palate.

93
POINTS

PRICE \$14.00

MADE BY Tabacalera Oliva S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua
WRAPPER Ecuador
BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 7" by 50





Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí Torpedo

The name may sound ominous and illicit, but the Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí Torpedo is really a stand-up, law-abiding cigar—and a very satisfying one as well. Owned by Alan Rubin, this intriguing series is a spin-off from the first Black Market brand, only the blend is quite different and so is the factory. While the original Black Market is made in Honduras, Black Market Estelí is produced at Plasencia Cigars S.A., a Nicaraguan factory located right in Estelí, the country's epicenter for handmade smokes.

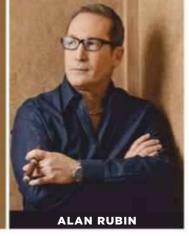
Playing to the theme, the cigars are packaged in crate-like boxes, as though they were stolen freight boosted from a cargo plane or container ship. If you're not into cloak-and-dagger, then simply ignore the name and concentrate on the smoke. It's earthy and leathery with sweet, concentrated undertones of raisins and cocoa. The draw is flawless, delivering a weighty, substantial smoke to the palate, which speaks to the cigar's excellent construction and fine tobacco.

Working with the Plasencia family has many advantages, one of which being a vast library of tobacco to choose from. Black Market Estelí is a blend consisting of Nicaraguan wrapper, Nicaraguan filler and two binders: one from Honduras, the other from Nicaragua. Tasty as they are, all the tobaccos are of course, within legal U.S. compliance, even if you feel like you might be breaking the law.



MADE BY Plasencia Cigars S A

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua
WRAPPER Nicaragua
BINDER Nicaragua, Honduras
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 6 1/2" by 52
PRICE \$8.75



CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; OLIVA: RICHARD LEONARDI; RUBIN: JEFFERY SA

ICARAGU

SERIES

Montecristo Nicaragua Series Robusto

Montecristo is one of the most iconic names in the cigar world, but let's be honest: choosing a Montecristo can be confusing. There are at least a dozen versions of this line available in the U.S., and the styles range from very mild to quite full bodied to everything in between. Sometimes, there can be too many choices. This year, however, the choice was clear. The Montecristo Nicaragua Series Robusto was the most balanced and dynamic Montecristo we encountered in 2018.

The cigars are sold and distributed in the U.S. through Altadis U.S.A., a subsidiary of Tabacalera USA, which, in turn is owned by tobacco giant Imperial Brands PLC of Great Britain. While it may sound overly corporate, the people behind this brand are true cigar lovers with full understanding of the market, the industry and the reputation of a classic trademark like Montecristo.

The cigar is a new one, launched in the summer of 2018. Its blend is a collaboration between Rafael Nodal, head of product capability for Altadis U.S.A., and cigarmaker A.J. Fernandez, who makes quite a few brands for Altadis, including this one. The result is a fine cigar made in Nicaragua, and made solely from Nicaraguan tobacco.

The balance of this cigar is undeniable, medium to full in body, resonating with the fine qualities of chocolate-covered espresso beans, rich woods and dried fruit.

93
POINTS

MADE BY Tabacalera A.J. Fernandez Cigars de Nicaragua

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua
WRAPPER Nicaragua
BINDER Nicaragua
FILLER Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS 5" by 54
PRICE \$11.75



1	E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic Dom. Rep. • \$11.50 • 5 3/8" by 52	96
2	My Father La Opulencia Toro Nicaragua • \$11.80 • 6" by 54	95
3	The Wise Man Maduro Robusto Nicaragua • \$10.50 • 5 1/2" by 50	95
4	Padrón Family Reserve No. 44 (Natural) Nicaragua • \$32.10 • 6" by 52	95
5	H. Upmann Sir Winston Cuba • £32.91 • 7" by 47	94
6	Arturo Fuente Hemingway Work of Art Dom. Rep. • \$9.65 • 4 7/8" by 60	94
7	JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano Nicaragua • \$5.98 • 4 3/4" by 52	93
8	Oliva Serie V Melanio Churchill Nicaragua • \$14.00 • 7" by 50	93
9	Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí Torpedo Nicaragua • \$8.75 • 6 1/2" by 52	93
10	Montecristo Nicaragua Series Robusto Nicaragua • \$11.75 • 5" by 54	93
11	Quai d'Orsay No. 54 Cuba • 14.00 euro • 5 3/8" by 54	93
12	Punch After Dinner Honduras • \$5.89 • 7 1/4" by 47	93
13	La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero Chisel Dom. Rep. • \$9.70 • 6" by 54	93
14	Tatuaje Fausto FT153 Toro Nicaragua • \$8.75 • 6" by 50	93
15	Villiger San'Doro Colorado Churchill Nicaragua • \$9.56 • 7" by 50	93
16	Joya de Nicaragua Antaño Gran Reserva Robusto Grande Nicaragua • \$9.50 • 5 1/2" by 52	93
17	Micallef Reserva Limitada Privada Nicaragua • \$42.00 • 7" by 52	93
18	Nat Cicco Aniversario 1965 Liga No. 4 Churchill Nicaragua • \$7.29 • 7" by 52	92
19	Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo) Cuba • £46.10 • 5 7/8" by 52	92
20	Rocky Patel 15th Anniversary Toro (Tubo) Nicaragua • \$12.40 • 6" by 50	92
21	San Cristobal Quintessence Corona Gorda Nicaragua • \$8.25 • 5 5/8" by 46	92
22	Trinidad Santiago Belicoso Dom. Rep. • \$9.90 • 6" by 52	92
23	OneOff +53 Super Robusto Nicaragua • \$30.00 • 5 3/4" by 48	92
24	Plasencia Cosecha 146 San Luis Honduras • \$13.50 • 5 3/4" by 54	92
25	Ramon Allones by AJ Fernandez Churchill Nicaragua • \$14.00 • 7" by 50	92

For more coverage of our Top 25 and full video reveal of the best cigars of 2018, go to CigarAficionado.com



Quai d'Orsay No. 54

Created in the 1970s exclusively for the French market, the old Quai d'Orsay brand came in a handful of sizes and was considered a fairly mild to medium-bodied smoke. But the Cuban cigar monopoly recently launched a completely new Quai d'Orsay, transforming it from a regional cigar to a global brand. The bands and boxes were redesigned, the line was given two new sizes—thicker vitolas intended to appeal to a larger market—and the cigar was reblended, giving it more character. Now, the brand can be found all over the world, and we found the No. 54 to be quite remarkable. While today's Quai d'Orsay is different, it's still no powerhouse, but a subtle and refined Cuban cigar that's one part sweet and one part savory like a salted caramel praline.

93
POINTS

MADE BY
Habanos S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Cuba
WRAPPER Cuba
BINDER Cuba
FILLER Cuba
DIMENSIONS 5 3/8" by 54
PRICE 14.00 euro



Punch After Dinner

Occasionally, a cigar's quality defies its price tag. This was particularly true for the Punch After Dinner, a full-sized Churchill that retails for less than \$6 yet delivers a performance easily worth twice as much. It's a true multinational blend with a wrapper from Ecuador, a U.S. binder and filler from Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. In lesser hands, such a blend might end up muddy and nondescript, but the tobaccos here come together quite cohesively, each leaf playing off the next for a dense, chewy smoke that's earthy and sweet. Like all cigars from the core Punch line, it's made in Honduras by General Cigar. This is a smoke that has been on the market for 20 years, though given its suggested retail price, it seems immune to inflation.

Tobacco Group, Danlí

FACTORY LOCATION Honduras

WRAPPER Ecuador

BINDER U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf

FILLER Honduras, Nicaragua, Dom. Rep.

PRICE \$5.89

DIMENSIONS 7 1/4" by 47



La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero Chisel

The La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero Chisel is one of the most unique cigars on the market. Its wrapper gleams with oil, the filler is loaded with strong tobacco and the head is shaped like a wedge. Odd as it may seem at first, the wedge shape fits quite comfortably in the mouth. The words "Double Ligero" are as much a warning as they are a descriptor. This is a powerful cigar full of Dominican ligero tobacco—the strongest type—which brand owner Litto Gomez grows on his own farm. As if the blend wasn't full-bodied enough, the tapered head concentrates the smoke, amping up the intensity, but there's plenty of charm to the cigar as well, with notes of leather, ground pepper (both red and black) and wood.

EBY Tabacalera
or S.A.

POINTS

MADE BY Tabacalera
La Flor S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER Ecuador
BINDER Dom. Rep.
FILLER Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS 6" by 54
PRICE \$9.70



CAMPFIRE SMOKINESS



TOFFEE

NO.4 IN THE GLENFIDDICH EXPERIMENTAL SERIES

Glenfiddich has long pushed boundaries and challenged traditions. Never has this been more evident than with Fire & Cane. It's a bold fusion of campfire smokiness with oak and peaty notes, finished in Latin rum casks to produce a surprising toffee sweetness.



Tatuaje Fausto FT153 Toro

Pete Johnson doesn't deny it: his Tatuaje Fausto is the strongest cigar in his portfolio. Created as a private blend for a Hawaiian retailer, Fausto became a full commercial line in 2011, taking its name from a discontinued vintage Cuban cigar brand. The horned image of Mephistopheles burned into the cabinet's lid echoes the original box art and references the tale of Dr. Faustus, an ambitious scholar who made a pact with the devil. The smoke is a dense, concentrated cigar, full of coffee bean, earth, white pepper and a sweet hint of molasses. This is not a mild smoke, and it's obviously intended for those who prefer full-bodied blends. With a retail price of less than \$10, you can have this very strong experience without feeling as though you've sold your soul.

MADE BY My Father Cigars S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Ecuador

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 6" by 50

PRICE \$8.75



Villiger San'Doro Colorado Churchill

Swiss company Villiger & Söhne has been in the tobacco business since the 1800s, but its only been making premium cigars for two decades. The decision to explore the handmade sector was made by company owner Heinrich Villiger, who not only believes in the segment's potential, but is a smoker of handmade cigars himself. The Villiger San'Doro has been a consistent performer with CIGAR AFICIONADO since the brand was introduced in 2015, and the Churchill marks the second time that a San'Doro Colorado has appeared on the Top 25 list. When it debuted, Villiger San'Doro cigars were made at the Oliva Cigar factory. Production has since moved to Joya de Nicaragua, but the blend is the same and the cigar still performs at a very high level.

MADE BY Fabrica Joya de Nicaragua S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Ecuador

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 7" by 50

PRICE \$9.56



Joya de Nicaragua Antaño Gran Reserva Robusto Grande

Everyone thought it was gone forever, but last year, Joya de Nicaragua brought back its Antaño Gran Reserva line. Once a limited-edition brand from 2005, the new cigar is made with the same blend as the Joya de Nicaragua Antaño 1970, only this Gran Reserva has older filler tobaccos. In the cigar world, a little extra age can go a very long way. In this case, it put the Robusto Grande on the Top 25 list. Joya de Nicaragua is the oldest cigar factory in Nicaragua, and the company believes the Gran Reserva to be emblematic of the quintessential Nicaraguan cigar. The wrapper is from Jalapa and full-bodied ligero from Estelí is at the heart of the filler, but the extra age has refined the blend.

MADE BY Fabrica Joya

de Nicaragua S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Nicaragua

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 5 1/2" by 52

PRICE \$9.50

POINTS

THE FIRST SINGLE MALT SCOTCH FINISHED IN INDIA PALE ALE CASKS



This is the first release in the Glenfiddich Experimental Series, designed to push boundaries and create the unexpected.



BALANCE OF RIPE GREEN APPLE ZESTY CITRUS NOTE FOLLOWED BY SWEET VANILLA AND A HINT OF FRESH HOPS.



93 POINTS

Micallef Reserva Limitada Privada

Micallef is a very new addition to the cigar world, but the Riserva Limitada Privada is a standout smoke that came to the market completely by chance. As owner Al Micallef tells the story, he happened to be in a cigar lounge in Texas when the Gómez Sanchez brothers, Joel and Edel, walked through the doors. Their car had broken down and, being cigar makers, they offered to roll some cigars for the patrons. Micallef says he was so impressed with the cigars, he asked them if they would create a personal cigar just for him. Soon after, a business was born. The Micallef Reserva Limitada Privada won't come cheap, but it's a nutty, balanced and interesting blend that contains, among other things, Peruvian tobacco in the filler.

MADE BY Gómez Sanchez Family 1934 Factory

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Mexico

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Honduras, Dom. Rep., Peru

DIMENSIONS 7" by 52

PRICE \$42.00





Nat Cicco has certainly come a long way. In 1965, the first Nat Cicco cigar brand came to market with the less-than-dignified name "Rejects." These machine-bunched, hand-rolled, medium-filler cigars were aimed at budget conscious consumers under the pretense of being "factory rejects," and sold at bargain prices. Things changed in 2012 when Nat Cicco created a line of handmade, long-filler cigars called Nat Cicco Aniversario 1965, made in honor of the brand's humble beginnings. The No. 4 Churchill is made with an Ecuador Habano cover leaf and pigtail cap. If the idea was to complete the portfolio with a serious cigar, they succeeded with the Churchill, showing that a company once known for rejects can produce a winning smoke.

MADE BY Agroindustrial Nicaraguense de Tabacos S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Ecuador

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 7" by 52

PRICE \$7.29



Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo)

This isn't the first time the Cuban Cohiba Siglo VI has made the Top 25 list, and most likely will not be the last. It has scored in the 90s repeatedly in our tastings since it was introduced in 2004. When it first came to market, the Siglo VI entered some new ground for Cohiba. At the time, this was the fattest Cohiba ever launched (the size is called Cañonazo in Cuban cigar factories) and it was the first Cuban cigar to showcase the new "lipstick" style, pull-top aluminum tube. It's not the strongest Cohiba, as the Siglo series is lighter than the core Cohiba line, but the Siglo VI is by no means mild, nor inexpensive. According to Habanos, the best tobacco in Cuba is reserved for the brand, and that lofty claim is reflected in the price.

MADE BY Habanos S.<u>A.</u>

FACTORY LOCATION Cuba

WRAPPER Cuba

BINDER Cuba

FILLER Cuba

DIMENSIONS 5 7/8" by 52

PRICE £46.10



BEST CIGAR BUYS OF THE YEAR

he average retail price of a Top 25 cigar is more than \$16, but you don't have to reach for Andrew Jackson to buy a great smoke. We analyzed the hundreds of hand-rolled cigars from this year's tasting database, and discovered two dozen that impressed our panel and also delivered wallet-friendly prices—and that makes us happy. Here are 24 cigars that scored 87 points or higher, each with a suggested retail price of \$6 or less (before taxes). There are some big names here, with cigars from Arturo Fuente, H. Upmann, La Aurora, Oliva, Punch and Padrón, in a variety of shapes and sizes (robustos, coronas and a trio of Churchill-sized cigars). And price-conscious connoisseurs take note—there are even two Top 25 cigars that made the Best Buy list: The JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano from Aganorsa Leaf, and the Punch After Dinner from General Cigar, which is more than seven inches long. Both scored 93 points. So, grab your lighters—it's a good time for top-shelf smokes that won't break the bank. —David Clough

93 POINTS

Charter Oak CT Shade Rothschild Nicaragua • 4 1/2" by 50 • \$5.00

JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano Nicaragua • 4 3/4" by 52 • \$5.98

Last Call by AJ Fernandez Chiquitas

Nicaragua • 3 1/2" by 50 • \$4.50

Punch After Dinner

Honduras • 7 1/4" by 47 • \$5.89

92 POINTS

Gilberto Oliva Reserva Blanc 5.75x43 Nicaragua • 5 3/4" by 43 • \$5.75

91 POINTS

La Aurora 1903 Cameroon ChurchillDominican Republic • 7" by 47 • \$6.00

Project 805 Petite Corona

Dominican Republic • 4" by 40 • \$4.99

90 POINTS

Gilberto Oliva Reserva 5x50

Nicaragua • 5" by 50 • \$5.80

Last Call by AJ Fernandez Pequeñas Nicaragua • 5" by 46 • \$6.00

89 POINTS

7-20-4 Hustler Series Dog Walker

Honduras • 4 1/4" by 40 • \$6.00

Don Diego Lonsdale

Dominican Republic • 6 5/8" by 44 • \$5.18

El Galan Semilla Cubana Habano Robusto

Nicaragua • 5" by 52 • \$5.40

Gilberto Oliva Reserva 5.75x43

Nicaragua • 5 3/4" by 43 • \$5.25

Henry Clay Rustic Cheroot

Honduras • 5 5/8" by 38 • \$4.25

H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon Corona

Dominican Republic • 5 1/2" by 44 • \$5.72

La Aurora 1962 Corojo Churchill

Dominican Republic • 7" by 50 • \$6.00

Padrón Londres Maduro

Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 42 • \$5.00

88 POINTS

Arturo Fuente Spanish Lonsdale

Dominican Republic • 6 1/2" by 42 • \$5.20

Brick House Double Connecticut Corona Larga

Nicaragua • 6 1/4" by 46 • \$6.00

Punch Punch EMS

Honduras • 6 1/4" by 45 • \$5.99

87 POINTS

A. Flores Gran Reserva 1975 Desflorado Half Corona

Dominican Republic • 3 1/2" by 46 • \$5.09

La Aurora 1962 Corojo Robusto

Dominican Republic • 5" by 50 • \$5.75

La Galera Maduro Chaveta

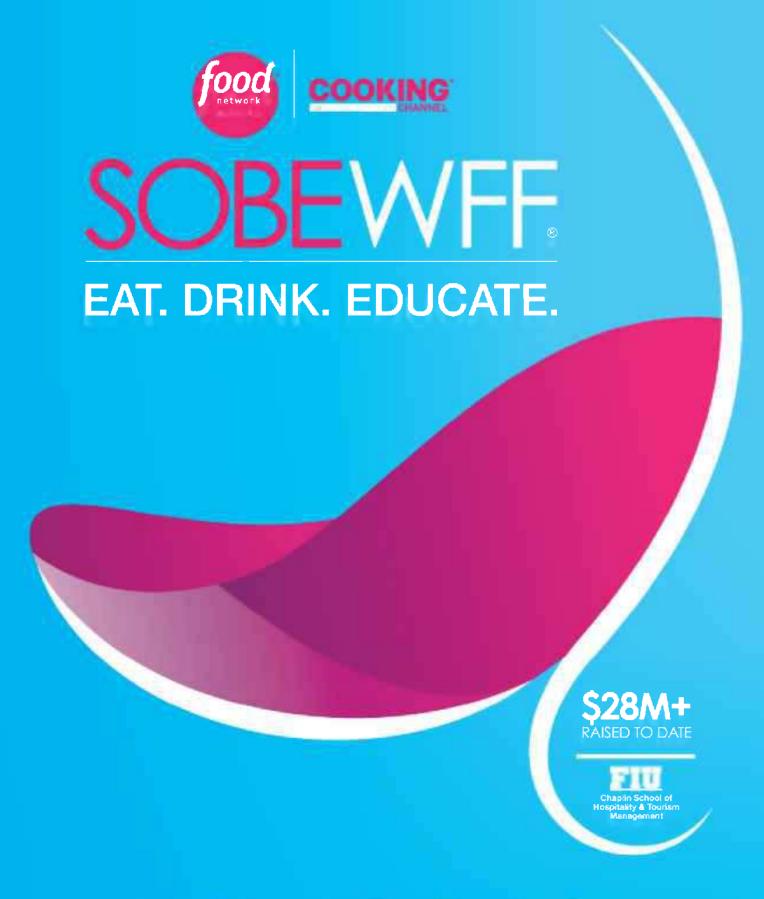
Dominican Republic • 5" by 50 • \$5.95

Nat Cicco Aniversario 1965

Liga No. 4 Robusto

Nicaragua • 5" by 52 • \$6.00





FEATURING

José Andrés David Burtka Rhonda Carano Giada De Laurentiis Guy Fieri **Neil Patrick Harris** Missy Robbins Nancy Silverton Trisha Yearwood

& Many More

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

FEB 20-24, 2019 | SOBEWFF.ORG | (1)



mastercard Preferred Card

TITLE

HOSTED BY & BENEFITING

OFFICIAL AIRLINE

HOST HOTEL

PREMIER













The New Hork Times



















PLATINUM







SPECIAL THANKS

DIAMOND















GOLD













20



92 POINTS

Rocky Patel 15th Anniversary Toro (Tubo)

It's been eight years since Rocky Patel released his 15th Anniversary cigar, but Patel decided to give it a new release of sorts this year. The blend didn't change, but the packaging did, with adjustments to the box (both inside and out) and the band, which has a bit more metallic luster, so while it's not a new cigar, it has a new appearance. Unlike many Rocky Patel cigars, which are made in Honduras, this line is made in his Nicaraguan factory, which he owns with partner Amilcar Perez-Castro, who oversees the operation. The Ecuadoran wrapper that covers this cigar combines with the Nicaraguan tobacco on the inside to produce a medium-to-full-bodied smoke redolent of nuts, chocolate, oak and vanilla.

MADE BY Tabacalera Villa Cuba S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Ecuador

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 6" by 50

PRICE \$12.40





San Cristobal Quintessence is one of five versions of the San Cristobal brand, a line of cigars made in Nicaragua by the Garcia family for Ashton Distributors Inc. What makes this different from the rest is the wrapper—a high-priming leaf of Ecuadoran Habano. It's lighter than the oscuro wrappers found on the core line. The rest of the tobaccos were grown on the Garcia's farms in Nicaragua. The Corona Gorda is the newest size in the line, and it has an impressive combination of balance and character. It's a leathery and spicy cigar but well layered with sweet notes of chocolate. The construction is remarkably good, and while the trend for cigars seems to be going thicker, Ashton took the corona gorda in the opposite direction.

MADE BY My Father Cigars S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Ecuador

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 5 5/8" by 46

PRICE \$8.25



Trinidad Santiago Belicoso

The non-Cuban Trinidad brand has been sleepy for quite some time. It's owner, Altadis U.S.A., hadn't done very much with the cigar in the last 10 years, opting to focus on its larger, more recognizable brands. Rafael Nodal decided that this needed to change. He's the head of product capability for Altadis and the driving force behind many of its new, creative projects. To bring Trinidad out of its slumber, Nodal collaborated with Dominican cigarmaker and tobacco grower José "Jochy" Blanco. The result was Trinidad Santiago, a bright, vibrant blend of all-Dominican tobaccos grown by Blanco. The Belicoso is full of earth, coffee and licorice notes that transition elegantly into a honeyed, woody finish that kept us wide awake the entire time.

MADE BY Tabacalera Palma S.A.

FACTORY LOCATION Dom. Rep.

WRAPPER Dom. Rep.

BINDER Dom. Rep.

FILLER Dom. Rep.

DIMENSIONS 6" by 52

PRICE \$9.90



POINTS



OneOff +53 Super Robusto

The OneOff brand has a bit of a mysterious background. It was created in 2001, gaining a cult following for its unusual packaging and fairly low production numbers. Oddly, the trademark was abandoned before being picked up by Cuban Crafters, which produced a short-lived version that was quite unremarkable. Today, the brand is owned by Dion Giolito of Illusione fame. His vision was to restore the cigar to its cult status by giving it the high-quality and unique tobaccos he felt it deserved. OneOffs are made at Aganorsa Leaf, where most Illusione cigars are produced. Of the eight sizes, the +53 Super Robusto really resonated with us. It's twice the price of the other cigars in the line because Giolito says the tobaccos are different, making it a cult size within a cult brand.

MADE BY

Aganorsa Leaf

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Nicaragua

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 5 3/4" by 48

PRICE \$30.00

24



Plasencia Cosecha 146 San Luis

The Plasencias have been growing cigar tobacco for a very long time—according to the family history, since 1865. But the year 2011 holds some significance. Not only was it a banner year for tobacco quality, but it marks 146 years since the family's inaugural harvest. So the Plasencias decided to create a brand using tobacco from the 2011 vintage and name it after the family's 146th crop. All of the tobacco in Cosecha 146 is from Criollo '98 seed. The wrapper comes from the Jamastran Valley in Honduras, while the binder comes from Estelí, Nicaragua. The filler is a mix of tobaccos from Nicaragua (Condega) and Honduras (Olancho and Jamastran Valley). There's some tobacco from the 2012 crop as well, as each growing season extends into the following year.

MADE BY Tabacos de Oriente

FACTORY LOCATION Honduras

WRAPPER Honduras

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua, Honduras

DIMENSIONS 5 3/4" by 54

PRICE \$13.50

25

RAMON ALLONES



92 POINTS

Ramon Allones by AJ Fernandez Churchill

A.J. Fernandez is undoubtedly the "go-to-guy" in the industry for reinvigorating classic Cuban cigar lines with strong, Nicaraguan blends. Ramon Allones is a perfect example. Owned by General Cigar, Ramon Allones was never very successful in the United States, so Fernandez wanted to see if he could succeed where General could not. What he came up with was a purely Nicaraguan cigar made with a blend of Corojo '98, Criollo '99, medio tiempo and a hybrid tobacco that he grows in Estelí. General still owns the trademark, but they've turned over both manufacturing and distribution of Ramon Allones to Fernandez, who has given splendid new life to a cigar brand that definitely deserves it.

MADE BY Tabacalera A.J. Fernandez Cigars de Nicaragua

FACTORY LOCATION Nicaragua

WRAPPER Nicaragua

BINDER Nicaragua

FILLER Nicaragua

DIMENSIONS 7" by 50

PRICE \$14.00



AUSARASIN AGAUORSA LEAF

IZ ONE ZIEMCLH





N PERNAM

SHONAE

SICA DE TAR







A PERNAM

SHONES

DCA DE TAR





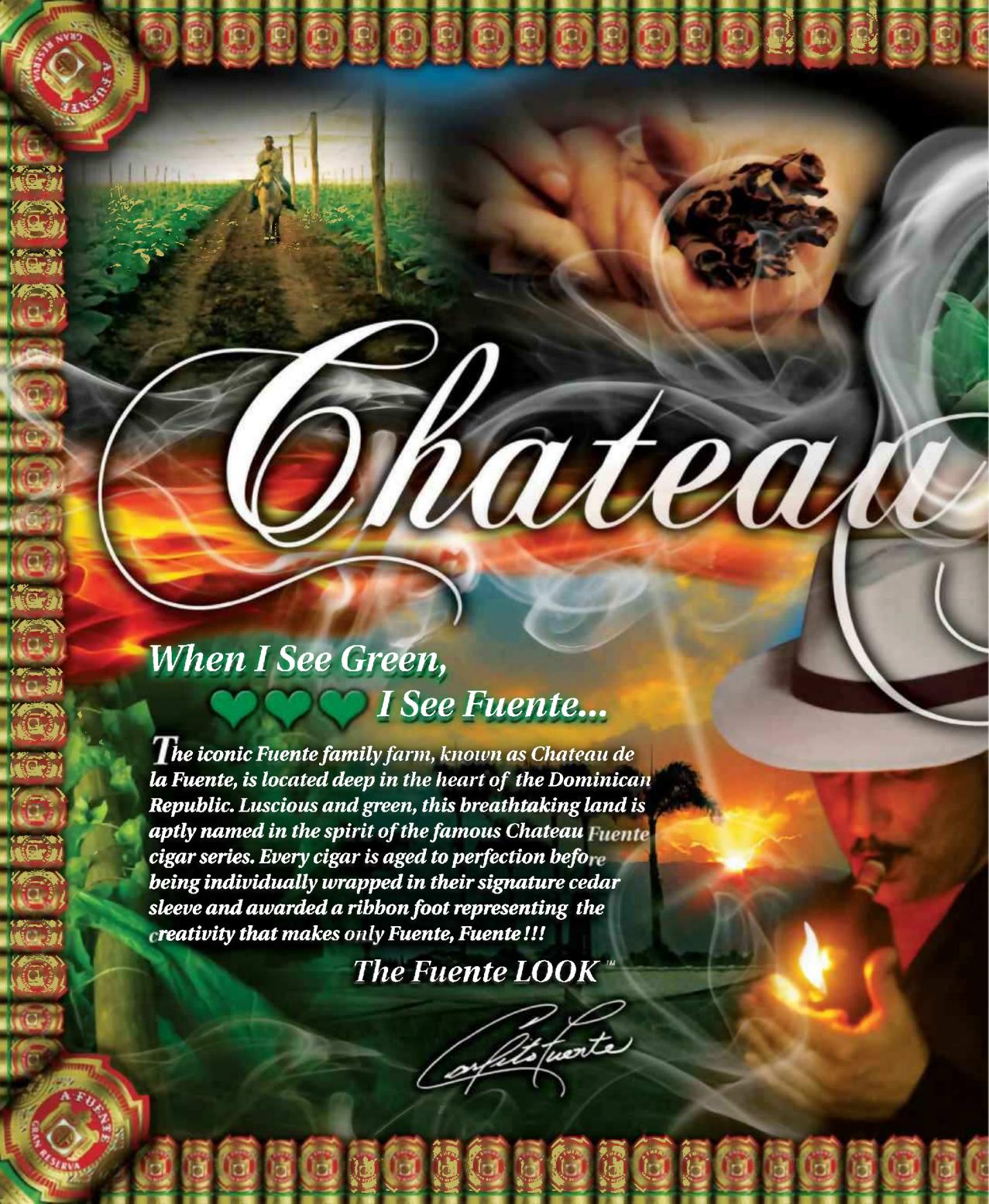




AGANORSALEAF.COM



1-800-856-7930





Living For J.C.

Few golfers love golf as much as Jimmy Dunne, who owes his very life to the game

anging near the center of all the memorabilia that decorates and accentuates Jimmy Dunne's office in midtown Manhattan is a small, framed piece with the words "Jimmy's Motto" written as a headline. "Every morning in Africa a zebra wakes up and knows it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed," it reads. "Every morning the lion wakes up and knows it must outrun the slowest zebra or it will starve. It doesn't matter whether you're a lion or a zebra, when the sun comes up you better be running!"

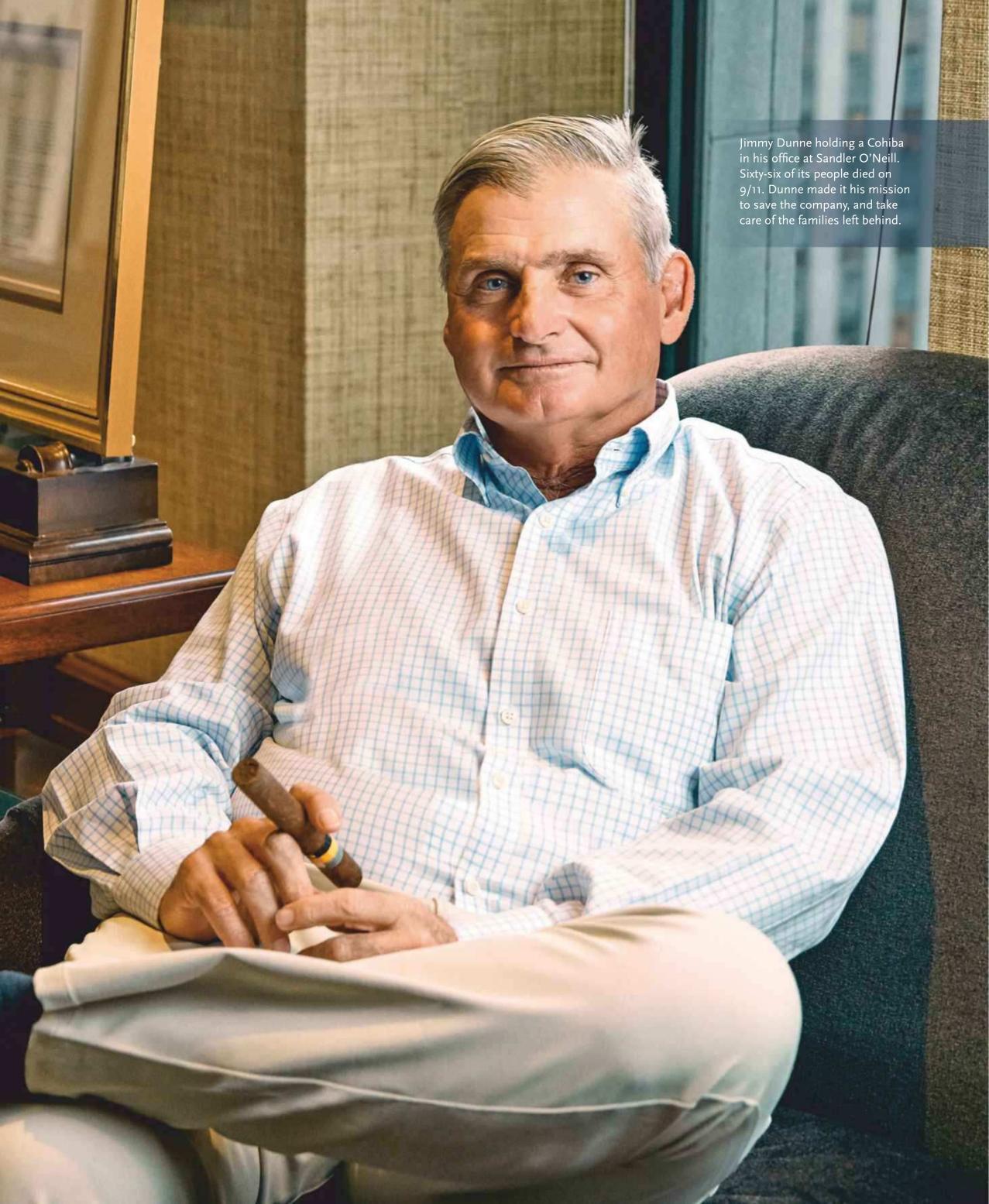
There is an accompanying photo of a zebra chasing a lion. The zebra is labeled "Sandler O'Neill," and the lion, "everyone else."

As the senior managing partner of Sandler O'Neill, a New York-based multifaceted investment banking company, Dunne is the ultimate up-and-runner who long ago fulfilled his up-and-comer destiny. In business, in personal life, in the game of golf, the guy who is known by friends as the "Dunne Man" is up at the crack of dawn and ready to go-24/7 and 365 if need be. And he's known to smoke a fine cigar whenever he can.

The life of Jimmy Dunne is the stuff of dreams—and of a nightmare. At the heart of it is the 27-year marriage to wife Susan and their three children. At the forefront of it is his role as the leader of a very successful business. At the soul of it is his passion for the game of golf. The man is 62 years old but lives a life so expansive there doesn't seem to be enough time to cram it all in, especially considering he's an avid and accomplished golfer who plays to a single-digit handicap. He has a resumé of club memberships that borders on the astonishing—Augusta National, Shinnecock, Seminole, Cypress Point and Pine Valley, to name a few—and a roster of A-list friends across all strata of society.

BY JEFF WILLIAMS • PORTRAITS BY MATT FURMAN







"He's a guy who is really comfortable in his own skin," says Tom Brady, the New England Patriots quarterback, one of Dunne's many friends. "He says what he thinks, means what he says and is very endearing. He can be tough, but he's incredibly warm. I think for Jimmy, the harder something is to accomplish the harder he works at it. It's the hallmark of a great leader to hunker down and work harder than anyone else."

Golf feeds Dunne's competitive spirit, nourishes his social nature and nurtures his vast connections in the financial world. "Golf has been an important part of my life for as long as I can remember," says Dunne in his slightly raspy New Yorker baritone, which commands attention while not demanding it. He looks you in the eye, delivers his message clearly and crisply. "It started with my father; he had a great appreciation for the game," he says. "He thought it enhanced all the great characteristics—you're outside, you

are moving around, you are at pretty places, you are enjoying the day and you are around really nice, successful people. He thought it was an absolute, fantastic game and he instilled that into me."

And the game of golf saved Jimmy Dunne's life.

eventeen years ago Dunne was playing so much golf—and so well—that he was becoming increasingly interested in playing competitively. On the morning of September 11, 2001 he was at the Bedford Golf and Tennis Club north of New York City, trying to qualify for the U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship. His mentor Herman Sandler had told him not to call in that day, just concentrate on playing his best, and after a frost delay he was off to a strong start. After four holes on that crisp, perfectly clear day, he was one under par, when he was approached by a tournament official who



Dunne plays regularly with an enviable list of golfers, including Rory McIlroy (on the tee) and Phil Mickelson. His motto (above) is a framed reminder about keeping ahead of the pack, and is prominently displayed in his office.

delivered the horrifying news of what was unfolding in downtown New York, what was happening at his company headquarters back in the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

Dunne's original plan was to attempt to qualify a day earlier, on a different golf course. But Chris Quackenbush convinced him to change his plans. Quackenbush was Sandler O'Neill's head of investment banking, and he was Dunne's best friend. They had known one another since high school.

"He picked up the application. He said 'Go to Bedford on the 11th—you'll get it under par,'" says Dunne. "I picked up the application, I handed it to Debbie." Debra Paris was Dunne's assistant. "Debbie died," says Dunne, his voice loud, a hint of pain in his eyes. "Chris died."

Sandler O'Neill had 171 employees who worked on the 104th floor of Tower 2, the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Eighty three of them came to the office on 9/11. Sixty six of them perished, including Quackenbush and Sandler.

Had it not been for his change of plans, Dunne would have been at the World Trade Center that day. But that round of golf saved his life. Kept him here to live on, to keep Sandler O'Neill functioning.

Dunne raised the firm from the ashes of that devastating day. He led a rebuild of a company that had lost nearly every trace of its financial records, many of its partners and an enormous amount of the people who formed the firm's intellectual capital, who did its day-to-day business. The company had lost all its computers, its phone numbers. Every aspect of the business had to be painstakingly restored.

Dunne made sure that salaries and bonuses were paid, health insurance was taken care of, that there was a fund for college scholarships for the firm's children. He spoke at no fewer than 20 of the funerals. Dunne's hard-charging nature, his absolute determination and his devotion to those he cared about meant that he would fight the ultimate fight.

"Whether it was the guys I caddied for, the teachers that I had, coaches that I had, the parents that I had, the sisters that I had, all those people who took time and effort and invested in me, this was the moment their kindness and their confidence in me needed to be paid back," says Dunne. "Regardless what would happen, if I had to give it my absolute all and either successfully do the right things or literally die trying, and I was very willing to pay that price."

Sandler O'Neill managing director Richard Olstein, who hired Dunne for his first job in finance in 1978 at the firm L.F.

Rothschild, recalls the Herculean efforts that Dunne put in the months and years following 9/11. "In my view, he is the only person I know who could have taken this firm from where it was after 9/11 to where it is now," says Olstein. "He's got very strong character. He's concerned not only about execution but the manner of execution and he wants things done right. He's demanding of the people who work for him, but no more than he is demanding of himself. He's a terrific leader."

After the attack, golf was on hold for Dunne—he spent nearly all of his time on resurrecting the firm. It took a couple of years before he could get himself to feel good about playing again, about being back with his vast array of friends that he had made through the game.

One of those friends is Seth Waugh, former CEO of Deutsche Bank Americas and the new CEO of the PGA of America. "He is an enigma of sorts, both the simplest and the most complicated," says Waugh of Dunne. "He's got very strong opinions and yet

he's also the most loyal guy on earth and at the end of a day a teddy bear... He's always rooting for the guy that's down and yet he walks with the kings."

Lou Nanni, vice president of university relations at Dunne's beloved alma mater Notre Dame, says Dunne "has this rare ability to develop rich and meaningful relationships with those struggling on the margins as well as those who are very successful and are at the highest

levels of society. He's a study in contrasts. His combination where he is hyper competitive, but he is also genuinely compassionate. I see that as a rare combo. He's knows brokenness. The brokenness in his own life has led to incredible compassion."

ames J. Dunne III grew up in the Long Island village of Babylon, 40-odd miles east of Manhattan. He was the only son in a house filled with four sisters, raised by his mother Ann and his father James Joseph Dunne, an executive with Arrow Shirt Company. From the get go he was a hard charger who knew the value of money and the independence it would bring, and was as demanding of himself as he would become of others. "My parents instilled an attitude if you wanted to get something done, you had to go out and get it," says Dunne. "Nothing would be given to you. My mother developed an underdog mentality in me. Sort of the opposite of today where you are the greatest star in the sky. Her attitude was 'Jimmy, all these guys are tough, people are smarter, people are faster, you gotta go. You got to get up and go get it.' It worked for me. It doesn't work for everyone."

It was his father who introduced him to golf, first at muni courses on Long Island, then by joining the Southward Ho Country Club in Bay Shore. "I can still remember [my father] saying Jimmy, they don't have tee times there,' that you can come, hit a few balls and play. We were used to waiting three or four hours to play nine holes."

Driven to make money to establish his own independence, Dunne got a job caddying at the club at the age of 11, telling everybody he was 14. His father had often told him that part of being successful in life was being able to anticipate the consequences of his actions, or those of others. With a 25-pound bag on his shoulder, he learned to anticipate the needs of his player. Maybe even more important was learning to coexist in the caddie yard with a hard-scrabble group from a different social strata. "I got a good education about golf and life in that caddie yard. I didn't go in there with any feeling of entitlement," says Dunne. "Caddying was a huge piece of the foundation of my life because I knew what it felt like when the guy put the \$7 in my hand rather than \$5."

The man who would eventually become one of the smart guys of the Wall Street world was learning his trade at Southward Ho, even if he didn't know it. He learned to play golf for money on Mondays, caddie day, and he played cards with the other caddies on his downtime. "They played gin rummy, which I had to get good at quickly," says Dunne. "They played for money and nobody liked to lose any money, and there was value in someone who was good and sharp and a good gambler. That was status."

"I got a good education about golf and life in that caddie yard. Caddying was a huge piece of the foundation of my life because I knew what it felt like when the guy put the \$7 in my hand rather than \$5."



Dunne learned an early lesson one day when his partner, a caddie named Leroy Brown, called him an idiot for breaking his club in a fit of anger during a money match, letting him know that he wouldn't be out just the money for the match, but also the cash for replacing the club. "He spoke to me as an equal. I wasn't a spoiled member's son who just did something stupid. I was his partner who lost my temper, had a violent reaction and he was unhappy and disappointed in me as a partner, not as a young man or a member's son. I remember feeling the responsibility. That made a big impression on me." (To this day, Dunne has a soft spot for caddies, and he frequently brings caddies to Augusta National, where he has been a member since 2006.)

One day, at the driving range at Southward Ho, Dunne met Quackenbush, who would become not only a golfing partner but his soul mate and coworker. Long before they worked in high finance, the two toiled together in a far simpler way. He and Quackenbush wanted to raise money to pay their own college tuition, so they started a house painting business. Their business card read "Tuition Paying Painters." With the ultimate stroke of good fortune, one of the houses they painted belonged to a member of the iconic Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, who arranged for them to play. Playing the course with a jaw that was often agape, Dunne knew he wanted to be a member, even if he didn't know exactly how he would do it.

Dunne went to Notre Dame, and graduated in 1978 with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in economics. He grew to love everything about the school, and has made frequent donations to his alma mater. In 2016, he and his wife Susan donated \$20 million to build a residence hall that is named after him.

When Dunne didn't get into Georgetown Law School, the series of connections he had made through golf brought him to the financial world. He met Sandler in 1978, and in 1988, Dunne joined Sandler and other executives from Bear Stearns to found Sandler O'Neill. Soon, Quackenbush joined, coming from Merrill Lynch. All was roses, a blossoming firm at the top of Tower 2, until the devastation of 9/11.

The events of 9/11 are never far from his thoughts, though he doesn't like to dwell on them. His mission to save Sandler O'Neill was undeniably a success, as the company is bigger than it was before, with some 320 financial professionals. The private firm doesn't disclose revenues. Dunne says that what happened didn't change him, it just motivated him even more. "Sometimes something happens in somebody's life

and they say that changed them," Dunne says. "9/11 didn't change me a single bit. Not one iota did it change me. The intensity in which I felt things was different. So when I hugged my children good night I know that I held on longer and a little tighter."

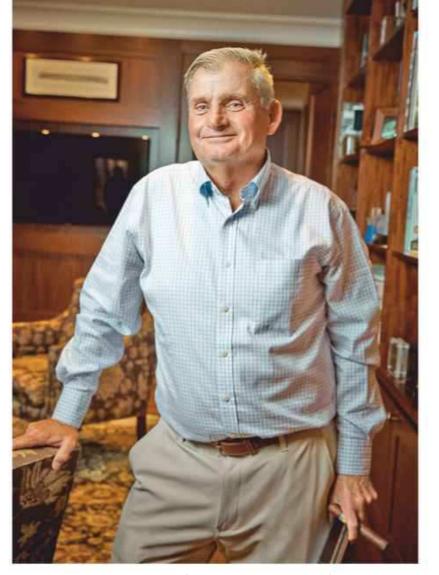
"The guy's got a heart as big as the state of Texas," says John Bannon, a lifelong friend in the financial business who is also a fellow golfer and occasional caddie for Dunne in the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. "The kids of the fathers and mothers that we lost in 9/11, to see that their kids had nothing to worry about as far as school and insurance? You could say that he's a guy that tries to do something for someone every day and not expect a thing in return. I'm pretty psyched to call him a friend."

Dunne has made endless friends through golf and business. That's where he met Brady, and so many other people who love the game like he does. He is president of the Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Florida, where he plays with pros such as Phil Mickelson, Rory McIlroy, Justin Thomas, Nick Price and a host of other big names. "He's one of a kind," says Thomas. "What I respect about him is that he is so well-respected and worked very, very hard his whole career to get where he is."

Dunne and Waugh used to have an annual outing, five men and their sons playing golf and learning about the vastness of life. One year, Waugh hosted the group for dinner in the Hamptons. He knew how much Dunne had put into resurrecting Sandler O'Neill, how he was virtually nonstop. On this night, he saw a different Dunne sitting on the beach.

"We sat there in the dark and he was smoking a cigar," says Waugh. "He was as content as I've ever seen him."

Dunne likes to smoke a fine cigar wherever he can. He's especially fond of Cubans. "I like Cohibas, Montecristo No. 2," he says. Romeo y Julieta Churchills also appeal to him, as do Cohiba Behikes—when he can find them. He smokes in his den, on the golf course and by the pool at his house near Seminole. "I find time late in the day, when everything is done," he says, "to sit down for an



Cubans make up much of Dunne's go-to list of cigars, including Cohibas, Romeo y Julietas and Montecristos.

hour or so with a cigar—I really enjoy it." He began smoking cigars as a young trader, emulating the move of one of the firm's veterans.

Cigars played a role in one of Dunne's deals: the multibillion dollar acquisition of John Middleton Inc., the maker of Black & Mild machinemade cigars. John S. Middleton, the principal owner of the Philadelphia Phillies, had known Dunne personally for a few years, and approached him when he thought about selling. "I said to Jimmy, 'I know this isn't your space, but I trust you,' " says Middleton. "He has the highest set of ethics and morals that I've ever seen."

Middleton thought his cigar company was worth X. "I said, 'I think it's worth X-plus,'" says Dunne. Altria Group Inc. bought Middleton for \$2.9 billion in cash in 2007, with

Sandler O'Neill serving as financial adviser. A memento of the deal sits high on one of Dunne's office bookshelves.

When asked if a \$2.9 billion deal is a big one, Dunne's eyes light up. "I'm from the Anthony Quinn school," he says with a small smile. "There are no small deals."

Deals of that size deserve celebration at places like Shinnecock, a course that awed a young Dunne with its majesty and beauty so many years ago. Today, he's not only a member, he's been club champion three times. He also shot a 63 there in 2010, a round that included an ace on the par-3 11th hole. The ball lay in the hole with the large Q facing upward, the way Dunne has always marked his ball since the death of Quackenbush.

Dunne has given and gotten so much through golf, and sees it as a way to get to the heart of a person. "I had a friend who once said you don't really know somebody until you've had dinner with them or played a round of golf with them," he says. "I'm not sure about the dinner, but I'm positive about the round of golf."

And last summer, all those rounds finally brought Dunne to the only place on the course that had long eluded him—playing as a competitor in a USGA event. On July 30, Dunne shot a 73 at Tavistock Country Club to earn a spot in the 64th U.S. Senior Amateur Championship. As soon as he made the roster, the congratulations came pouring in, including a celebratory tweet from Justin Thomas. "The first USGA event for the Dunne-Man!"

It wasn't a great tournament for Dunne, but he crossed one big, longstanding item off his to-do list that day, one more accomplishment in a life filled with them. And he played the same way he has for more than 17 years, hitting a white ball decorated with that letter Q, his constant reminder.

Given his standing in the business world, his portfolio of golf clubs, his roster of friends, his history of doing good by all, the Dunne Man might just be the ultimate golf partner. •

Jeff Williams is a Cigar Aficionado contributing editor.

INSIDE AND OUT.





COHIBA MACASSAR

Housed beneath rare Macassar wood, Cohiba Macassar delivers an equally rare smoking experience. It's a luxurious presentation, befitting the world's most luxurious cigar.

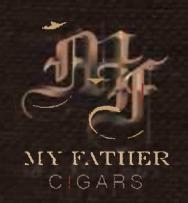
COHIBA COM

6 9 0

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:

Cigars Are Not A Safe Alternative To Cigarettes.





Cofficating 3 Officers



LA GRAN OFERTA

OFERTA

THR CIGARS

CALIFORNIA THE PARTY OF THE PAR

Mado -

305.468.9501 | MYFATHERCIGARS.COM

Gambling on Cambling On Cambridge On Cambri

Sports bettors are catching onto eSports—
the fast-growing phenomenon of
professional video gaming BY MICHAEL KAPLAN

with gamblers. Many will be looking to bet on the NBA. Others will be going for the NCAA. Over the course of that week, wagers will also have been made on everything from rugby to hockey to auto racing.

Human beings have proven that they will bet on most anything. As one casino wag puts it, "a cricket match or a cricket race." But are we ready to lay down good money on Millennials feverishly playing computer-games? Forward-thinking gambling industry professionals, when considering the hot new trend that has come to be called

ome this Sunday, one thing is all but certain. Casino sports books will be packed

"The prevalence of eSports betting has snuck up on major [sports gambling] operators," says Matt Kaufman, a consultant with Eilers & Krejcik Gaming, a boutique research firm for the casino industry. "The companies that got in early have gained significant edge. They have robust eSports sports book offerings." According to Kaufman, you bet on eSports games the way you bet on every other sport—wagering on teams, with odds or money-lines tempering the action.

eSports, reply with a resounding yes.

There are several facts that lend credence to the optimism. At the moment, eSports ranks as the fastest-growing segment in sports betting. In 2016, eSports generated more than \$1 billion in wagers worldwide, and it is expected to be considerably higher by 2020. That will be derived from gamblers wagering their money on teams that feature kids with player names like Amnesiac, Crimsix and Faker competing at games such as League of Legends, Counter-Strike and Defense of the Ancients 2 (usually referred to as Dota 2). The Dota 2 Championship, played in Vancouver, Canada, last summer and known as The International, generated \$25 million in prize money. Casino corporation MGM International recently partnered to build a 30,000-square-foot arena devoted to the playing of eSports in its Luxor Hotel & Casino. And the segment is frothy enough that DraftKings offers daily fantasy-sports wagering for eSports.







Top: Rogers Arena in Vancouver, Canada, is full of gaming fans during the first day of the International 2018 Dota 2 Championships on August 20. Above: Fans go wild during the final match on day six of the tournament.

ESports is a growing business that has attracted no shortage of high-profile investors. Celebrity athletes like Michael Jordan, Alex Rodriguez, Shaquille O'Neal and Michael Strahan have an interest in the eSports space. Reality TV star Mark Cuban, along with Ashton Kutcher and Elisabeth Murdoch, have already invested in Unikrn, an entity that focuses on taking eSports wagers. "We have action 24 hours per day, seven days per week," says Rahul Sood, a former Microsoft executive who serves as co-founder and CEO of the Seattle-based operation. "There are hundreds of games every week and at least 5,000 games to bet on per year."

While Unikrn is not yet taking wagers from American gamblers, Sood and others expect that to change soon (even in states where sports betting is legal, eSports has not been widely regulated or consistently allowed; hence, America is the second largest market for illegal eSport wagering, right behind China). Seth Schorr, whose Fifth Street Gaming in Las Vegas works with the newly

opened Ocean Resort Casino in Atlantic City, is pushing for the place to be an eSports hub. "We're working with New Jersey regulators," he says. "Maybe they will be comfortable with us [regularly taking wagers] next year. Like with everything, it's about having controls, preventing cheating, creating a system for resolving disputes. We'd rather do it slow and do it right."

He knows from where he speaks. Besides working with Ocean, Schorr is also chairman of the Downtown Grand, in downtown Las Vegas. It's a five-year-old hotel and casino with a young clientele. It is also the first place in America to accept action on eSports.

Schorr spearheaded the Grand's taking of eSports wagers on three occasions (the last time being 2017), each one more successful than the last. The second-generation casino executive would do it all the time if getting clearance wasn't so cumbersome.

"The process is to apply for each bet [and betting event], which makes sense," Schorr allows. "You can't bet on just any football game in a casino. But you can bet on the NFL. It has to meet integrity expectations. And we have not yet defined the eSports league that fits the criteria."

As a result, each betting opportunity needs to be reviewed individually and it takes time. "We are working to create standards that will make Nevada and other states able to decide the games that should be bet on," he adds. "I expect that to be fine-tuned next year."

s the law stands now, eSports lovers can already compete in their own eSports tournaments. At the Level Up bar inside MGM Grand in Las Vegas, gambling opportunities are set up like poker tournaments in which multiple people play against one another and the top finishers get chunks of the prize pool.

In light of anticipated legalization, smart money says that if you bet traditional sports and overlook eSports, you may be missing out on the next big thing. In 2019, betting on kids playing computer games sounds an awful lot like gaining ground-floor

entry to a hot new area of gambling. Imagine if you began wagering on the NFL back in the 1940s, when the point spread was first introduced. It would have been pretty juicy then—eSports seems to be pretty juicy now.

Smart bettors overseas are already capitalizing on lines that tend to run weaker than those made for the NFL as they get moved by uninformed gamblers. "Right now, it is possible to come in, gain an understanding of eSports and get a leg up," says Adrian Saelen, an eSports betting analyst with the online bookmaker YouWager. "You can do something as simple as figuring out which teams have the largest fan bases and gain value by betting the other way." At the moment, he believes U.S. teams in general are undervalued.

It's easy to believe that betting-lines put up for eSports would be ripe for exploitation. Following decades of handicapping football and basketball, seasoned oddsmakers make few mistakes that result in soft lines. It's different with eSports. "The potential for a sports book to put out a bad line for eSports is higher than it would be for the NFL and NCAA," confirms Kaufman. "But then the books are not accepting the large wagers that they take for the NFL. Nobody takes a \$10,000 bet on a League of Legends match."

Sood acknowledges that the economy of scale is different in the eSports betting arena. "A whale in our business can turn over \$40,000 or \$50,000 per month," says Sood. "Whereas a whale in traditional sports is a million or more. Over time, though, as liquidity increases, our limits will go up."

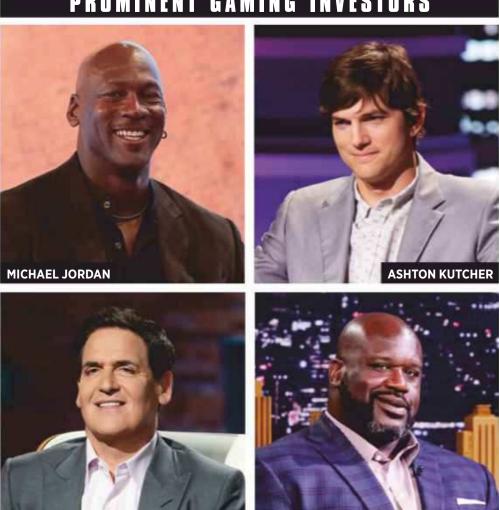
Despite the low limits, it's surprising that advantage players people like James Grosjean, Richard Munchkin and Kelly Sun, who analyze casino games and beat them brutally—have not yet applied their savvy to cashing in on eSports' inefficiencies. Kaufman figures that their incursions will come. "Once the books start taking larger wagers, I'm sure there will be teams of young guys who really know eSports teaming up with sharp bettors who have large bankrolls," he says. "To the best of my knowledge there is not a Billy Walters of eSports. But there will be. It will get there."

Saelen is confident that a new generation of gamblers will spur the growth of eSports wagering. They comprise a fresh breed of folks who obsess over eSports stars the way their fathers and grandfathers idolized Jordan and Namath. "Right now," says Saelen, "most of the people who watch eSports are really young"—or at least too young and too skint to bet in casinos. "If you're 15 and watching the matches, you're probably not set up to bet on them. But you're really into it. When I was between 12 and 20, I spent every waking hour playing and watching eSports. Now when I watch, I bet."

Sood puts a sharper and more morbid spin on the question of growth: "If the median age of a baseball fan is 56, then you can figure that for every Major League Baseball fan who passes away, four future eSports fans are born. One way or the other, whether we put people into the eSports space or not, it has to grow."

Kids who follow eSports play the games in much the same way that NBA-obsessed teenagers spend after school on basketball courts. Following the same parallel, a small number of eSports fanatics develop into the Pistol Petes of that world and get plucked from amateur leagues to turn pro. The most popular offerings that they play are Byzantine strategy games that involve taking out other players with digital weapons and conquering

PROMINENT GAMING INVESTORS



Esports has gotten the attention of some serious celebrity investors, like Michael Jordan, Ashton Kutcher, Mark Cuban and Shaquille O'Neal.

MARK CUBAN

pixelated lands. Join a top team and you can earn \$200,000 or more for possessing the mindset of a multitasking chess player and the reflexes of a professional assassin.

To older generations, this may sound like a ridiculous way to make a living. But to kids in their teens and adults in their 20s (the sweet-spot is 21 through 23 and male), professional eSport athletes, as they like to classify themselves, are part rock star and part sports star. And for those who get to the top, the game is no joke. "They're in a highly competitive environment with huge pressure," says Ian Smith who heads up the eSports Integrity Coalition, an organization that works to ensure eSport matches are kept clean and free of fixing. "The lifestyle is not unlike that of Rafael Nadal or Novak Djokovic"—albeit, in a team setting. "They earn a hell of a lot of money but travel two days a week, practice seven hours a day, live in hotels. These guys are kept really busy. They do not have a lot of spare time and there is no real off-season."

Like all serious athletes, professional eSports practitioners are cognizant that their time at peak playing level is limited. "It is high pressure and high speed; and when you lose your speed, you lose your competitive gaming edge," continues Smith, adding that they recognize the need to remain healthy and to preserve brain cells. "I've seen the athletes have blowouts after big tournaments. They like to go out clubbing and stuff, but the training and playing regimen stops them from doing a lot of that. I wouldn't put them alongside baseballers and footballers [in terms of their propensity for partying]. I'm sure some players own Maseratis, but these guys are not rappers. They are not pushing blingy lifestyles to their supporters and social media followers."

"A new generation of gamblers will spur the growth of eSports wagering. They comprise a fresh breed of folks who obsess over eSports stars the way their fathers and grandfathers idolized Jordan and Namath."

At least not yet, as Smith allows, "Eventually one guy will come along and have the kind of personality that is aspirational. Then others will follow and it might become more of the norm the way it has in other sports."

Despite being an enterprise that seems cerebral and clean-cut, eSports comes with a built-in gambling component that comes off as completely organic. Many of the popular computer games come with a feature known as "skins." These are basically weapons or adornments—some functional and adding advantages for playing games, others simply looking cool—that can be won or purchased for the characters online.

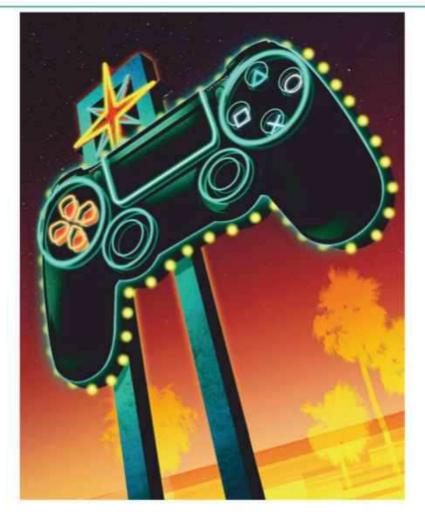
An online body, called Valve, assigns accepted values to the items and serves as a skins market-maker, facilitating the buying and selling of virtual items for real dollars.

Almost instantly, running parallel to the popularization of Bitcoin, skins turned into a kind of crypto currency. Gambling, of course, soon followed. People would use skins to bet on matches against each other or wager on the outcomes of larger matches played by top teams. Valve keeps players honest in terms of what their skins are truly worth.

But it gets way more degenerate than that. The most blatant form of skin gambling is a side-game called Jackpot. "A bunch of different individuals put their items into a pool and there is a wheel that spins," explains Dustin Mickowski, a quality assurance and design consultant for eSports gaming companies. Bettors wagering on the spin of the wheel receive numbers, as in roulette, and "your likelihood of winning is based on the value of your item. If yours is worth \$100 and mine is worth \$5, you would have 20 chances of winning as opposed to my one chance," he says. "There are a ton of websites doing that." And enough people to keep Jackpot games going all day.

f we were to be cynical here, we might think that eSports will soon become a candy store for sharps who gamble with discipline and intelligence. After all, the market seems full of people who were taught to be random bettors by the very games they play as youths and wager on as adults. Their blunders will move the gambling lines and create opportunities for people who know what they're doing. Great Britain's Gambling Commission wouldn't disagree. An exposé on skins, published by the BBC, was headlined with the quote, "Children as young as 11 introduced to gambling."

In much the same way that the technology inherent in eSports



trains a generation to wager badly, it helps advantage players to gamble smartly. For starters, anyone who wants to handicap eSports will do well to dispense with pens and legal pads. Because the game is played completely online, there are tons of inarguable statistics that can be gleaned from past matches to predict future outcomes. Websites such as PandaScore.com use artificial intelligence to get granular stats about points scored, kills made, territories taken.

"For the biggest games there is tremendous data out there," says Kaufman. "Performance and outcome and statistics are all available." And these stats aren't shaded by personal opinions or biases, making the game as mathematical as blackjack.

Adds Schorr, "The thing with betting on eSports is that a lot of the innovative websites and platforms either have

artificial intelligence watching what is on the screen or they have an API into the game. It is a direct interface so that they get every bit of information: Hits, kills, assists and the circumstances under which specific players do particular things."

Handicappers working for Unikrn use that kind of information and build computer models that figure out statistical odds for teams playing against each other. It's the same kind of predictive modeling used on Wall Street and by top horseplayers like Bill Benter and Don Johnson. "We put a bunch of factors into a database and come up with a number," says Sood, making it sound easy. "We look at player history, matches they have played, how they have done against each other, how certain players perform under various conditions. We analyze the data, aggregate it and create odds."

The bigger the database gets, the more accurate and the more efficient it becomes. "It used to take hours for us to build odds for tournaments," says Sood. "Now we can do it in seconds. We have so many elements in our models that we can build odds pretty quickly."

And if eSports keeps growing, as gambling-industry insiders believe it will, then a sports-betting model seems likely to gain in value, and benefit from being in action sooner rather than later. "Some people think eSports is a fad," says Kaufman. "But I grew up with this. There is a generation for which these games are viewed no differently than traditional sports—right down to the desire to meet their favorite players." Considering the question as to whether or not we are ready to bet on 20-somethings playing computer games, Kaufman dryly concludes, "This is not going anywhere." �

Michael Kaplan, a CIGAR AFICIONADO contributing editor, writes frequently on gambling.

MICALLEF CIGARS







Building a whole new cigar experience.





CIGAR AFICIONADQ'S

BIG SMOKE FLORIDA

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2019
SEMINOLE HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO
HOLLYWOOD, FL

25+ PREMIUM CIGARS INCLUDED WITH EACH TICKET

Aging Room | Alec Bradley | Arturo Fuente | H. Upmann
Hamlet Paredes | La Aroma de Cuba | La Flor Dominicana
Montecristo | My Father Cigars – El Centurion
My Father Cigars – Vegas Cubanas | Nub | Oliva
Padrón | Rocky Patel
More to be announced.

E_NJOY A FA_NTASTIC _NIGHT OF CIGARS, DRI_NKS, GA_MBLI_NG & _MUCH _MORE!





















BUY VIP TICKETS FOR AN EXTRA HOUR OF SMOKING TIME!

TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW.

WWW.BIGSMOKEFLORIDA.COM







Build a Better Bar

A man's home may be his castle, but that castle is incomplete until it has a proper bar BY JACK BETTRIDGE ears ago, my brother was house hunting and asked me to check out a nearby beach property. What impressed me more than its views of the Long Island Sound was the interior: almost every room had a wet bar, replete with an ice-making machine. I remarked that the owner must be a serious cocktailian, and the realtor revealed that this was an East Coast abode owned by none other than Rodney Dangerfield, who had decamped for Hollywood. Despite his onstage protestations, the comedian earned my immediate respect—as well as envy.

Dangerfield's setup may be overkill, and frankly I've never been able to match his level of liquid hosting. But over the years, I've moved into and out of many homes, ensuring that each one had a proper bar for entertaining. Yours should have one too.

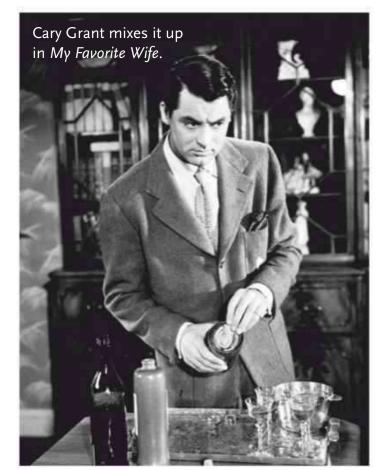
BAR ANTHROPOLOGY

There is no one bar setup that will suit every entertainer. Choosing the appropriate character from a few basic lifestyle categories will help.

- The First-Timer So you've finally settled down, but square footage is still at a premium and your significant other doesn't smile at the notion of a full bar dominating the domicile. Opt instead for a low-slung cabinet and hide the bottles behind sliding doors. The coolest we've seen has a motorized column lift, bringing the liquor to table height when needed. But you can get by with a simple credenza with a slate or glass top. Make sure it has enough room to store a few bottles, plus your humidor.
- *The Gentleman* When you're king of your own castle you deserve more elbow room than a mere cabinet. Graduating to a tall

armoire with shelves gives you not only ample working space to build drinks, but the real estate you need to lay in such an array of bottles to meet just about any drink order. An even bolder move? Carve out some of that precious closet space you paid extra for.

• The Professional Most of us work all our lives trying to create the perfect man cave, but the precocious Otter of Animal House exemplified it as a college student: a full, glittering bar in his fraternity-house room. Of course, you'll want a back-lit, back bar on glass shelves to show off your spirits collection and perhaps a walk-behind bar, which offers your bottles some modicum of protection and gives you a proper place to serve your guests. But most of all, living the dream means cutting the umbilical cord with the rest of the house. For that, you'll need a sink with



running water, a refrigerator with a freezer and an ice-maker that makes good-sized cubes. Also invest in a door that locks.

CHOOSE YOUR POISONS

The 12 Bottle Bar (Workman Press) posits that with a dozen spirits and liqueurs one can create hundreds of cocktails. The authors are right, but for most guests you can do fine with fewer. You need at least five hard spirits, and you should tailor the spirits selection to the crowd you typically entertain. If they're cocktail people, choose a whiskey, a rum, a Tequila, a gin and a vodka. With that, you can build Martinis, Manhattans, and a slew of other mixed drinks. Your choices won't number in the hundreds, but you'll please all but the most arcane tastes. If you know cigars will be smoked—and we do hope cigars will be

smoked—adjust accordingly. Stock at least two types of whiskey, add a brandy, and make sure the rum is aged rather than clear.

Not included in the bottle count, for they take up such little space, is at least one bottle of bitters and two bottles of vermouth. Both are absolutely essential for proper cocktails. You need one sweet and one dry vermouth. They won't clutter your bar, as it's best to store them in your refrigerator for longer life. If you buy only one type of bitters, make it Angostura, but a more complete bar includes orange and Peychauds. That trio allows for a world of cocktail possibilities.

As you gain more storage space and a larger budget, flesh out your bar. First, add more whiskeys to ensure variety. Add a rye to compare and contrast with your Bourbon, mix in some peaty

Basic Home Bar Toolkit



BAROMA DE CUBA

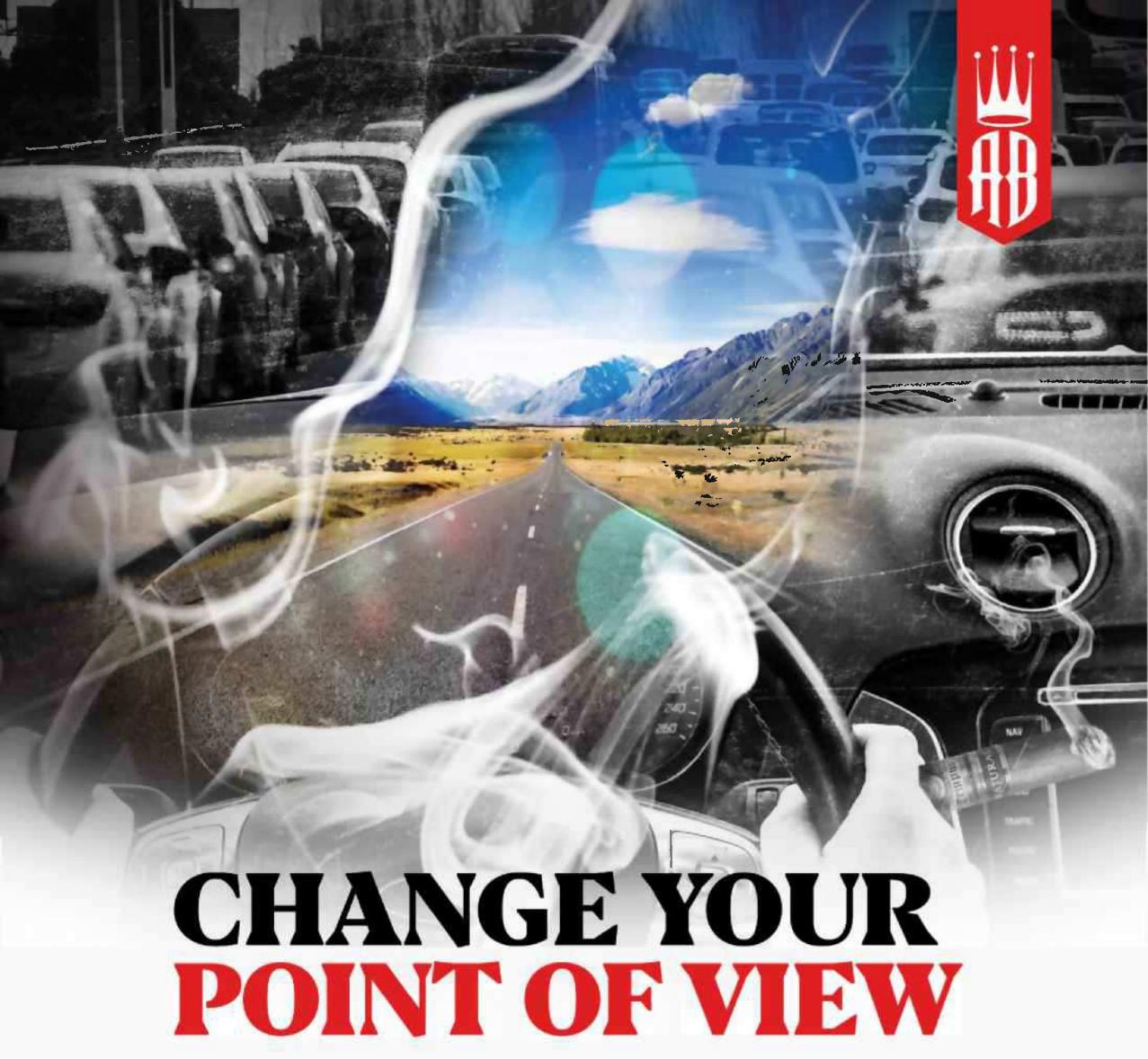




A taste from another time



www.ashtoncigar.com





ALEC BRADLEY Live frue.

>>> Available at the finest tobacconists worldwide.

single malts to offer a different taste from the blend you stock and consider Irish and Japanese whiskies. Expand on your brandies, with Cognac (we prefer XO and above for sipping), Armagnac and perhaps Calvados. Then consider alcoholbased modifiers, such as amaro, orange liqueur and Benedictine. Flavored spirits can be a waste of space. After all, you can always add a twist of lime to your vodka.

IMPLEMENTS OF CONSTRUCTION

The cocktail revival has meant there are more bar tools, which run from the essential to the helpful to the inane. The sine qua non of bartending is the shaker, and the one to have is the Boston shaker, a combination bar glass and metal topper, which allows you to see your drink as you build it in the glass. The metal will conform to the glass while you're shaking and then quickly pop off with a rap on the bar. Avoid all-metal shakers, which have the drawback of freezing together and taking a while to unfuse before your next drink. Kitschy shakers that come in the shape of roosters and rocket ships are display items and not meant for serious mixing.

Vital to the shaker setup is a strainer, of which there are two types: the Hawthorne, a flat disk with a coiled spring that fits snugly in the bar

glass, and a julep strainer, which is shaped like a large spoon with holes. The former is built for speed mixing. The latter is better at straining fruit and seed detritus. A good bar should have one of each. You'll want a bar spoon as well, especially if you're a stir-not-shake guy. The ones with spiral handles help to drizzle floaters on the top of drinks.

Most other tools can be substituted with standard kitchen

items, but as your bar grows you may prefer adding dedicated barware to your collection. In a pinch, anything long with a blunt end can be a muddler, your Estwing hammer will smash ice and you can squeeze lemons by hand, but why not have the real thing? True muddlers and ice mallets add style to your bar, and a juice press is best if you're operating at any kind of volume. Kitchen measuring equipment will work, but why not have a graduated shot glass or, better still, a stately jigger to measure your spirits in style?

You'll certainly want a knife, but the ones they sell for bars are essentially the same as the fruit knife in your kitchen drawer. And a device that plucks olives from the bottom of a jar? Save your money.



WHISKEY SOUR

1½ oz. Bourbon or other whiskey
1 oz. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. simple syrup (1 part water,
1 part sugar)
1 egg white

Mix all ingredients over ice in a shaker. Shake vigorously for as much as a minute. (Your aim is that the egg white starts to merengue, creating a pleasant foam.) Strain over fresh ice in a highball or rocks glass. Fill to brim and let settle. Slowly add any remaining foam to the top as a head. Smile as your guests enjoy your house drink.

Specialty of the House

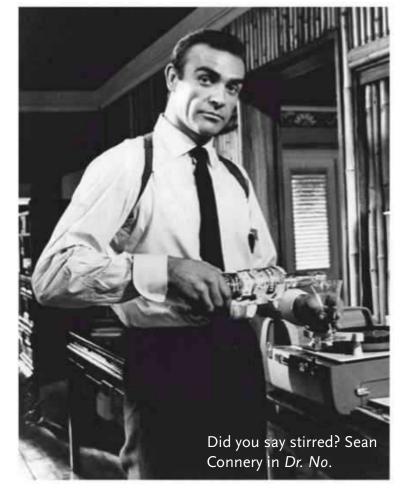
As your bar builds you'll want to develop cocktails for which you are renowned. In my house, one of my specialties is a Whiskey Sour, a tasty summit meeting of sweet, tart and savory elements. What makes this one stand out is the egg white, which adds foam as well as a great back story. Explain the drink's curious alchemy as you sip one with your guests.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

The spectrum of drinking vessels can be overwhelming. (The specialty glassmaker Riedel has at least one for every spirit.) But these three types represent a good starting point: highball, Old-Fashioned and cocktail glasses. The highball (or in a pinch the slimmer Collins glass) is the most versatile as it will hold any drink that takes ice and is perfectly acceptable for drinking neat.

The Old-Fashioned, or rocks, glass is home to a number of classic cocktails, including the one it's named for, and is good for sipping a spirit neat or on ice. You may know the cocktail glass as a Martini glass, but it's designed for most any drink that is shaken over ice and strained. You may be tempted by the modern vogue for huge birdbath-size glasses. Resist it. With no ice to keep them cool, such drinks will be warm before they're finished. If you're still thirsty, have another.

When you're looking to branch out and you find yourself repeatedly serving a drink that has a specialty glass—e.g. a Mint Julep or a Moscow Mule—by all means invest in that. But skip the shot glasses. Drinking contests are not for the aficionado. Buy tulip-shaped tasting glasses instead. They're perfect for sipping and savoring your whiskey, rum and brandy, ideally as you enjoy the item that gives you the most respect: a fine cigar. ❖



Another Exciting Year of Whisky Festival Vin North America







Announcing Our 2019 Dates CHICAGO

Hyatt Regency Chicago | March 29, 2019

WASHINGTON, DC

Marriott Marquis Washington, DC | April 10, 2019



SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco Marriott Marquis October 4, 2019

NEW YORK

New York Marriott Marquis December 3, 2019

Take Advantage of Early Bird Prices!

"WOW. What an amazing night. This was my second year attending WhiskyFest and I am already counting down to WhiskyFest 2019. I wish it was a two-day event so that I can try Single Malts on day one and all the great selection of Bourbons on day two. There are other whisky events and WhiskyFest is hands down the best - no comparison at all." — 2018 WhiskyFest DC Attendee

















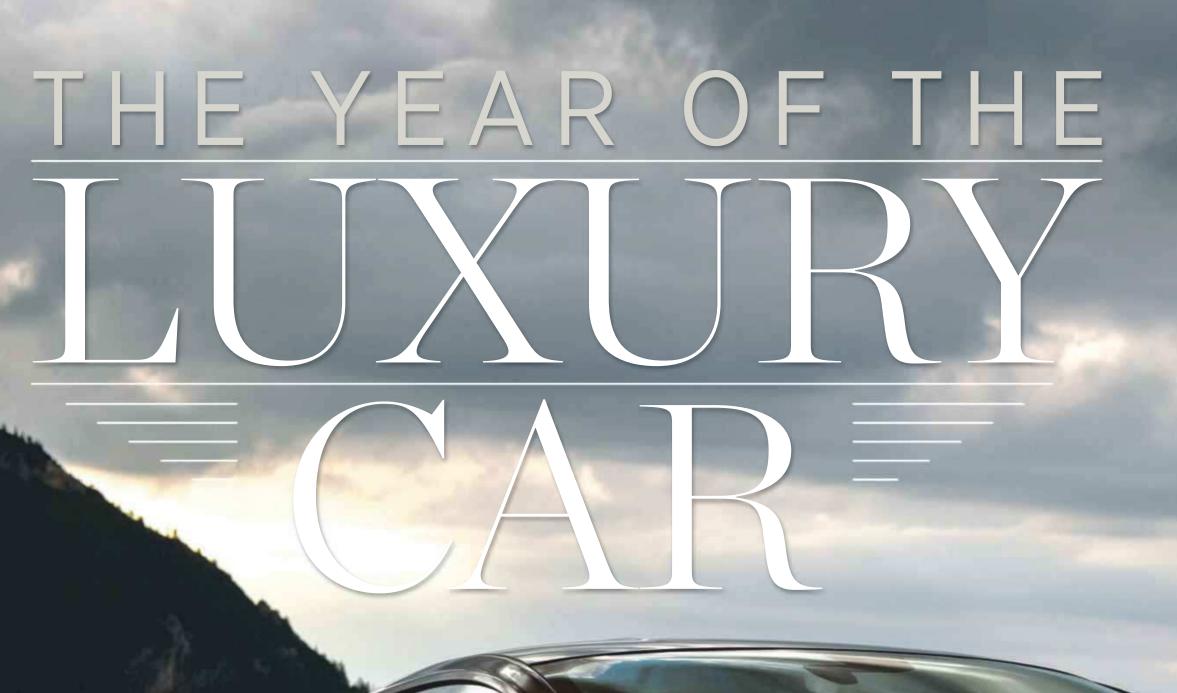


- Taste from a selection of more than 350 whiskies from around the world
- Meet the distillers and master blenders who make your favorite whiskies
- Enjoy a gourmet buffet all evening
 - * Current subscriptions will be extended

- Attend in-depth seminars by whisky experts—at no additional cost!
- Special Bonus: Receive a one-year subscription to Whisky Advocate magazine*.

Whisky

Buy Tickets At WhiskyFest.com







From souped up sedans to intrepid SUVs and eco-conscious plug-ins, the high end of the market is leading the 2019 model year

BY PAUL A. EISENSTEIN

hile auto dealers don't soap up their windows anymore to build excitement for the new model year, you still have plenty of reasons to be excited about the 2019 cars, trucks and crossovers now in showrooms or set to get there in the months to come.

That's especially true for luxury buyers. For one thing, there are more choices than ever from a wide range of foreign and domestic brands. They come in all manner of body styles and offer a dizzying array of premium features suitable for every budget. If performance is your top priority, you can choose from more than a dozen different models delivering over 700 horsepower. If you're determined to save the environment, 2019 brings the launch of a wave of new battery cars, some delivering more than 300 miles of range as well as tire-spinning power.

It's been said that today's cars are rolling computers, and the typical luxury model now has as many as 100 microprocessors on board to operate their powertrains, touch-screen infotainment technology and advanced driver assistance systems, with a number of the new 2019 models pushing close to fully hands-free driving.

The new model year also offers more ways to purchase your new car, truck or crossover. Sure, you can still pay cash, arrange for a standard loan or opt for a lease, but manufacturers are exploring creative alternatives such as the subscription programs now offered by Cadillac, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche and Volvo. Subscriptions typically feature flat monthly fees that cover everything from insurance to service and repairs. Just pay for gas. Some programs can be canceled on short notice and others allow you to swap vehicles on a whim—maybe a sleek sports car for the daily commute and a big SUV to take the family traveling over the weekend.

Here's a look at some of the hottest new 2019 models by brand:

ACURA Honda's spin-off was the first Japanese luxury brand, and it's got some intriguing new offerings for 2019, including an all-new version of its ILX sedan. But the big news comes with the complete makeover of the Acura RDX. The crossover grows bigger, roomier and more stylish, adding more tech toys—including one of the best audio systems on the road—as well as improved performance. RDX has been an instant hit, dominating its segment since its launch.

ASTON MARTIN Few brands have had more ups and downs over the years, but this is definitely a good moment for the brand best known for its long partnership with cinematic superspy 007. The big adventure for 2019 is the debut of the Aston DBS Superleggera, the first of seven

major new models planned to launch through early in the coming decade. It's a low, wide and imposing grand-touring car backed up by a 715-horsepower V-12. For those with an unlimited bank account and the desire for something truly unique, Aston is producing 25 reproductions of the classic DB5 featured in *Goldfinger*. For \$3.5 million there'll be plenty of "gadgets," though Aston won't confirm whether that includes Bond's ejection seat.

AUDI The German brand has been flooding showrooms with an assortment of all-new products in recent years, and 2019 is no exception. The big news is the debut of the Audi e-tron, the brand's first longrange, all-electric model. It's about the size of the more conventional Q5 sport-utility vehicle and will deliver more than 200 miles a charge. The e-tron is the first of more than a dozen plug-based models coming from Audi by 2025. The Volkswagen Group's biggest luxury brand also has an all-new version of its flagship sedan, the 2019 Audi A8, offering plenty of

traditional luxury features, as well as technology that can drive virtually handsfree on limited-access roadways.

BENTLEY This ultra-premium British marque has gone through some big changes in recent years, starting with the roll-out of its big Bentayga. While that SUV is now its best-selling model, Bentley hasn't abandoned its more traditional model lines, and for those who want a mix of lavish features and lots of power, the Continental GT goes through a thorough makeover for 2019. This coupe is the heart and soul of the Bentley brand and the new version is even more stylish, with truly breathtaking power.

BMW You need a scorecard to keep up with everything in the Bavarian maker's lineup, starting with a complete makeover of the 3-Series, the brand's heart and soul—and the best-selling luxury nameplate ever. Two versions will be available at launch, with more, including a new M3, to follow. Also undergoing a complete



update, the X5 gets three new versions, including the high-performance M Sport model, with a plug-in hybrid to follow. Add to the list the completely new X7, the most lavish SUV BMW has ever offered and a counterpoint to the flagship 7-Series. In fact, there will soon be three "halo" models with the return of the 8-Series coupe. If performance is your passion, check out the M850i xDrive—or you might prefer the next-generation Z4 roadster, which is the product of an unusual collaboration with Toyota and will use its underlying platform for the returning Supra coupe.

CADILLAC General Motors' luxury brand is in the midst of a major makeover as it shifts from traditional sedans and coupes to SUVs and CUVs. The big news for 2019 is the debut of the marque's third utility vehicle, the XT4. The compact model picks up on the Art & Science cues that have been a theme for Cadillac for more than a decade, with its distinctive vertical head and taillights. But the rough edges have been sanded down a bit, giving the new crossover-utility vehicle a more polished and refined appearance. Though it will be dropping some product lines, Caddy isn't abandoning the passenger car market entirely. The debut of the most powerful version of its flagship CT6 proves that point. The V-Sport model makes about 550 horsepower with its twin-turbo, 4.2-liter V-8. Caddy has also launched its new SuperCruise system, hailed as one of the most advanced semiautonomous technologies on the road.

CHEVROLET Yes, Chevy. Hard as it might be to think of the bow-tie brand this way, Chevy is one of the best-selling luxury marques based on price, thanks to its popular pickup line. Rival Ford has already nudged the \$100,000 mark with a version of its F-Series truck, and Chevy is pushing closer with the complete makeover of its full-size Silverado, the High Country edition loaded up with the sort of lavish features you'd normally expect from a German luxury sedan. And don't dismiss the latest version of the Chevrolet Corvette. The new, 755-horsepower ZR1 can give chase to the best import sports cars from the likes of Lamborghini and Ferrari.



FERRARI Speaking of the Prancing Pony, it has confirmed there's a highperformance SUV in the works, a concept that would have seemed ludicrous until Aston Martin and Lamborghini also weighed in. It could debut as early as next year. For those who want one of the Italian automaker's more traditional sports cars, 2019 brings the debut of the Portofino, replacing the old California T convertible. It will give you breathtaking performance and plenty of wind in your hair. If you've got the cash, however, check out the limited-edition \$350,000 Ferrari 488 Pista. Pista means track in Italian, and that's precisely the sort of performance you'll get from this midengine monster.

GENESIS In the beginning...Genesis started out as the first luxury model from Hyundai, but the Korean carmaker decided to spin it off as a separate luxury brand a few years ago, debuting with the big G90 and midsize G80. Now comes the G70, the Koreans throwing down the gauntlet with this BMW 3-Series-sized performance sedan. Visually, it's the most sporty model in the lineup and offers reasonably good handling and performance as well. Potential buyers will likely also be drawn to the G70s budget-friendly pricing and the fact that the brand has been topping the latest quality and customer-satisfaction surveys.

INFINITI The Japan brand was long something of an afterthought for luxury buyers, but Infiniti is gaining traction thanks to a mix of stylish and sporty new models along with innovative technologies such as the VCT engine. Short for "variable-compression turbo," it pulls off what had long been considered technologically all but impossible, adjusting its compression ratio on the fly to constantly optimize emissions, fuel economy and performance. The breakthrough engine is making its debut under the hood of the all-new Infiniti QX50 crossover-utility vehicle, which also gets the new, semiautonomous Pro-Pilot Assist system. Meanwhile, going forward, expect to see an array of new, electrified Infiniti offerings.

JAGUAR The British automaker is plugging into battery power, and its first all-electric model, the 2019 I-Pace, is winning rave reviews and redefining customer expectations. The battery-electric SUV not only offers more than 200 miles of range between charges, but breathtaking performance, as well. About the size of the brand's gas-powered, compact E-Pace, with its batteries and motors tucked under the load floor, the electric ute boasts the interior of a midsize F-Pace thanks to a distinctive cabin design that captures much of the space traditionally devoted to the engine compartment.



KARMA Things can get confusing when you're talking about this California carmaker. It originally debuted under the name Fisker and built a stunning plug-in hybrid sports sedan called the Karma. After its collapse, it was purchased and brought back to life by Chinese investors, the company rechristened Karma and the car, itself, the Revero. The four-seater is as beautiful as ever, undergoing some modest interior tweaks and a more extensive interior update. It continues to use the original powertrain, though range and performance have been improved and word has it a major update is in the works, possibly for 2020.

LAMBORGHINI Not that many years ago, it would've seemed like a contradiction in terms to use the words "luxury" and "SUV" in the same sentence. Not any more. These days, utes have become best-sellers and are a must in every model lineup. Lamborghini's take on the concept is the new Urus and, despite its size and interior space, it's still a classic Lambo at heart, its 4.0-liter V-8 punching out 650 horsepower and 627 pound-feet of torque—enough to hit 60 in a mere 3.4 seconds, with a top speed of 189 mph.

LEXUS It wasn't the first Japanese luxury brand, but Lexus has routinely been the best-selling, frequently topping European giants Mercedes-Benz and BMW. For 2019, it's put the spotlight on an all-new version of the mid-range ES sedan. For those who dismiss Lexus products as staid and, well, boring, the new ES could come as a surprise. It adopts a more stylish exterior, with a distinctive version of the now de rigueur Lexus spindle grille, while adding more features and improved performance.

LINCOLN Ford Motor is determined to bring its own luxury brand back to life after years of neglect. It scored a hit with last year's debut of the all-new Navigator, chosen North American Truck of the Year by a jury of 60 journalists. Now Lincoln is updating two smaller crossovers—and giving up on its unloved lettered naming strategy. For 2019, the midsize Lincoln MKX gets new sheet metal, a redesigned interior and a new





name: Nautilus. The bigger MKT undergoes an even more dramatic, ground-up remake, and will be rebadged the Lincoln Aviator. The three-row model will also become the first Lincoln to be offered with a plug-in hybrid drivetrain.

MASERATI There were plenty of skeptics when Maserati announced plans to offer an SUV. But the Levante won over most of those naysayers when it made its debut two years ago, initially offering two versions powered by a twin-turbo, 3.0-liter V-6. The GTS turns things up a notch, with its 3.8-liter, twin-turbo V-6 pumping out 550 horsepower and 538 pound-feet of torque—enough to launch it from 0 to 60 in just 4 seconds—and to take a broadside at the Porsche Cayenne Turbo, destined to be its most direct competitor.

MCLAREN Long known for its track prowess, Britain's McLaren has transformed itself into a formidable competitor on the street, and the brand building continues in 2019 with the debut of the 600LT-short for Long Tail. The LT delivers a welcome update to McLaren's "base" model, the outgoing 570S. Why Long Tail? Because new aerodynamic bodywork adds nearly three inches of overall length while reducing drag to enhance performance. Moving up the price and performance ladder, there's the McLaren Senna, a tribute to legendary McLaren Formula 1 champ Ayrton Senna. It is a track-focused hypercar delivering 789 hp and 590 pound-feet of torque from its twin-turbo, 4.0-liter V-8. The bad news? Unless McLaren decides to boost the production run, Senna is already sold out.



MERCEDES-BENZ The Schwabian automaker is determined to retain its crown as king of the luxury car hill, rolling out a broad array of new products. That includes its first all-electric crossover-utility vehicle the EQC, which will anchor an all-new family of EVs. Set to reach U.S. showrooms early in the new year, it's about the size of the more familiar Mercedes GLC crossover but uses an 80 kilowatt-hour, lithium-ion battery pack to deliver more than 200 miles per charge. Separate motors on each axle create the equivalent of all-wheel-drive, and with a combined output of 402 horsepower, they can punch the EQC from 0 to 60 in under 5 seconds. Among its more traditional line-up, Mercedes' big, bruising G-Wagen gets the most complete makeover in decades, while the smaller GLE is all-new, as well. Then there's the Mercedes-AMG GT Four-Door Coupe. As its name suggests, it adds two more doors and a bit more power to the marque's grand tourer.

PORSCHE If you're waiting for the long-anticipated update of the classic Porsche 911, you're going to have to sit back just a little bit longer, but Porsche fans have other reasons to rejoice this year. To start with, the carmaker has an all-new version of its Cayenne SUV on tap for 2019. It features a completely new design, better performance, and

lots more cool technology. But the really big news for 2019 is the arrival of what was originally known as the Mission E concept. The production version, dubbed Taycan, is Porsche's first allelectric sports car. The name is a Turkish term for "lively young horse," which suggests this is no staid enviro-box, but a more green-minded counterpart to the 911 that can hit 60 in a mere 3.5 seconds. Porsche says it's seriously committed to battery power and expects half its sales to come from plug-in and all-electric models by 2025.

RANGE ROVER The folks at Britain's Jaguar Land Rover have also made a big commitment to plug power, as we noted, with the debut of the new Jaguar I-Pace. On the other side of the company, its traditional SUV brand is also plugging in with what is being billed as the world's first off-road plug-in hybrid, the Range Rover HSE P400e. You'll get about 31 miles per charge, according to the EPA, but even when the battery is drained, you can keep going using the 296-horsepower, turbo-four gas engine. For those who want something more exclusive, Range Rover is also offering the limitededition SV Coupe. The two-door model gets its own sheet metal and a 557 hp version of the supercharged Range Rover V-8, with a lavishly customized interior and a price tag of \$295,000.

TESLA It's taken more than a year, but the battery-carmaker finally appears to be getting its production problems under control. Better yet, variants now include a dual-motor, high-performance edition making 450 horsepower and capable of hitting 60 in about 3.3 seconds, drawing comparisons to the vaunted BMW M3. Better yet, it adds a Track Mode for those who want more than just a fast launch off the stoplight. It doesn't come cheap, however, at more than \$70,000, including the optional Performance Package.

VOLVO Few brands had a more complete makeover in recent years. Volvo replaced its lineup, garnering an array of awards and favorable reviews. The Swedish brand is determined to prove that the station wagon isn't dead however, introducing a "twobox" version of its midsize 60-Series line for 2019. You can get it in standard wagon trim as the V60 or as a slightly more offroad-ready V60 Cross Country. Volvo has also launched a new compact model for the new year, the XC40 taking aim at the world's fastest-growing luxury segment. As you'd expect, both models are loaded up with breakthrough safety gear, but they're also stylish enough that some might be surprised to see the familiar Volvo "iron mark" badge on their grilles. �

Paul A. Eisenstein writes frequently on cars for Cigar Aficionado.

NEVER DELAY KISSING A PRETTY GIRL OR OPENING A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY.

~ ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Pick your pour and we'll do the rest. With nearly two decades of experience, Selective Search is North America's leading matchmaking firm. Using our proven Meet Your Future™ process, we help discerning men & women find their ideal match. Contact us today for a complimentary consultation. |sn't it time you poured two?

3,902

87% SUCCESS RATE

100%
CONFIDENTIAL & OFFLINE



EXECUTIVE SEARCH MEETS PERSONAL MATCHMAKING

866.592.1200

selectivesearch.com

info@selectivesearch.com

DEFINED HERITAGE. RE-DEFINED CONNECTICUT.





churchills.

It isn't often that you can trace the tobacco in your cigar back to the very plot of land where it came from. In the case of the Fuente Fuente OpusX Reserva d'Chateau, which scored a stunning 93 points, you can do just that. The unique and irreplicable character of the OpusX is due in great part to Chateau de La Fuente, the picturesque farm located in Bonao, a mountainous region of the Dominican Republic where the wrapper and filler tobacco for OpusX cigars are grown. The Alec Bradley Prensado Lost Art Churchill scored 91 points, reminding us that the sometimes forgotten cigar-making country of Honduras is still producing excellent tobacco and excellent cigars.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

FUENTE FUENTE OPUSX RESERVA D'CHATEAU

There's slight resistance to the draw of this solidly packed Churchill. It's a toasty, nutty smoke with an elegant, fresh-tobacco sweetness and a refined finish of roasted coffee bean.

U.S.: \$15.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS BINDER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY PRENSADO LOST ART CHURCHILL

A box-pressed Churchill with an even burn and full, lush draw. The smoke is rich and earthy, carrying a graham-cracker sweetness that builds to a finish hinting of chocolate-covered raisins.

U.S.: \$12.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

ASHTON CABINET SELECTION NO. 8

Woody and nutty in character, this large cigar draws and burns evenly, forming a flaky ash. It also takes on some notes of cedar and a touch of leather.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium





NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

MOMBACHO LIGA MAESTRO DOBLE ROBUSTO

A reddish-brown Churchill with a round head. It burns unevenly, but draws well, showing big espresso character with hints of leather and some floral notes. The woody finish leaves the palate a bit dry.

U.S.: \$11.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



93

91

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

NAT SHERMAN TIMELESS PANAMERICANA JULIETA

A handsome Churchill with an oily Colorado wrapper. It draws and burns evenly, showing big notes of walnut along with sweet hints of pecan, vanilla and maple. The finish is earthy and somewhat dry.

U.S.: \$13.45 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PERDOMO 20TH ANNIVERSARY SUN GROWN CHURCHILL

Softly pressed with rounded edges, this Churchill offers a thin smoke with notes of oaky vanilla, licorice and cedar that dissipate for a minty finish.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA BOX DATE: MAY 2018



107

of walnut, oak and spice are obscured by an unpleasant

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.90 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

waxiness. The finish is short.

corona gordas.

Don't let the coarse, rustic appearance of Mexican San Andrés wrapper put you off. When it's combined with a good, heady blend of Nicaraguan tobacco, the effect can be rich and magical. The La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Reserva Beso is made of such a blend, and it scored 92 points. It's produced in Nicaragua by the Garcia family for Ashton Distributors Inc., and the smoke makes a very tasty statement as soon as you light it, immediately dispelling any apprehensions about the less-than-pristine cover leaf. The Padrón Family Reserve No. 45 scored 92 points as well. It's also made in Nicaragua and contains some of the finest tobaccos in Padrón's inventory. The maduro version was named Cigar of the Year for 2009. Ten years later, the line still impresses us with its combination of power and complexity—not to mention those sophisticated, signature notes of cocoa found in many of Padrón's best cigars. Two smokes scored 91 points, the CAO Nicaragua Matagalpa (which, oddly enough, contains a lot of Honduran tobacco) and the San Isidro Geniales.



NICARAGUA

LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR RESERVA BESO

92

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5 5/8" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: MEXICO

Coarse and rustic in appearance with a dark, gritty wrapper. First puffs immediately show big notes of chocolate-covered almonds and earth while hints of raisin and minerals lead to the rich, nougat-like finish. U.S.: \$9.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

PADRÓN FAMILY RESERVE

92

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

A tall, box-pressed toro that draws and burns evenly. It's a spicy, woody smoke with rich touches of chocolate, coffee and vanilla bean. U.S.: \$27.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: HONDURAS

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

CAO NICARAGUA MATAGALPA

There's a good draw and burn to this dark, oily cigar. It's earthy and oaky with touches of vanilla and spearmint that lead to a bold, leathery finish. U.S.: \$6.59 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8"

SAN ISIDRO GENIALES

Though initially very herbal, this large cigar takes on the botanical qualities of juniper, licorice and boozy hints of amaretto, all of which are framed by a cocoa sweetness. WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$10.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: MEXICO** WRAPPER: BRAZIL

BELLAS ARTES MADURO ROBUSTO

There's a stunning contrast between the near-black wrapper of this cigar and its stark white ash. Flat at first, this cigar warms to show wood and black pepper balanced by sweet notes of chocolate and vanilla. U.S.: \$9.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8"

FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: FEBRUARY 2018

H. UPMANN MAGNUM 46 (TUBO)

A veiny robusto with a notably firm draw. The floral smoke becomes a bit richer and sweeter with notes of gingerbread, toffee and brown sugar.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.60 STRENGTH: Medium-Full





CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: FEBRUARY 2018

PARTAGÁS SERIE E NO. 2

A thick cigar with a wrapper the color of milk chocolate. Some initial acidity dissipates to show big notes of caramel, wood and a mineral finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £31.48 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA**

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

AGING ROOM PURA CEPA MEZZO

A big cigar covered in a dark, oily wrapper. Notes of chocolate and wood combine with touches of vanilla and sweet herbs.

U.S.: \$13.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: HONDURAS

BINDER: HONDURAS WRAPPER: HONDURAS

CAMACHO COYOLAR SUPER TORO

Finely constructed with a neat head and cap. The cigar burns evenly, imparting a spicy, leathery smoke with touches of brown sugar, ground pepper and coconut. U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 61/4" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JUNE 2018

MONTECRISTO DOUBLE EDMUNDO

Though reedy and dry at first, this large cigar warms to show a tasty smoke redolent of almonds, orange peel and tea. The burn and draw are even throughout. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £28.31 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA**

WRAPPER: MEXICO

ROCKY PATEL TAVICUSA TORO

First puffs of this large, dark-brown cigar are quite floral, and the smoke takes on notes of minerals and coffee bean before a slightly acidic finish. U.S.: \$10.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/4" FILLER: DOM. REP.

PARTAGAS LEGEND TORO LEYENDA

A very dark, oily cigar with pronounced box pressing. The airy draw delivers a woody, earthy smoke with wispy hints of leather and chocolate.

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF U.S.: \$14.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA**

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE NESTOR IV

Dark and oily, this box-pressed toro draws well, showing a sweet, oaky smoke with hints of malted chocolate, but an acidic finish affected the score.

U.S.: \$20.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

GREATER



CORONA CIGAR | ORLANDO, FL

Millions of cigars, hundreds of whiskeys and one-of-a-kind experiences!

Enjoy three Orlando locations offering exclusive cigars, authentic

Florida Sun Grown tobacco and private barrel whiskeys.

coronacigar.com



CASA DE MONTECRISTO | MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Casa de Montecristo is the perfect setting for any social gathering. Shop an extensive selection of the finest premium cigars and accessories, as you relax in fashionable smoking lounges equipped with full-service bar. With a friendly and knowledgeable staff to accommodate every guest, enjoying your favorite cigar has never been more enjoyable.

casademontecristo.com



SOHO CIGAR BAR | MANHATTAN. NY

Eat. Drink. Smoke... Indoors! Relax and enjoy flights and pairings from our curated selection of 150 world-class whiskeys and premium cigars. Then indulge yourself with any of our artisanal, crafted appetizers. Your table awaits.

sohocigarbar.com



OLD VIRGINIA TOBACCO CO. | NORTHERN VA

Relax and enjoy comfortable seating, friendly atmosphere, large-screen TV and the largest premium cigar selection. Seven locations in Northern Virginia, all minutes from Washington, D.C.

Come join us for a smoke! 1-800-999-OVTC

ovtc.com

VISIT GREATPLACESTOLIGHTUP.CIGARAFICIONADO.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION AND EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

GHGHE UP



DAVIDOFF OF GENEVA | MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Discover rare and exclusive cigars in our bespoke vault. Personalize cigar boxes and accessories or relax in our luxurious lounges. Davidoff of Geneva since 1911 is your passport to a cigar world above the ordinary. This is quality time, elevated.

Atlanta • Houston • New York • Las Vegas • Tampa

davidoffgeneva.com



Thousands of cigars and accessories plus a friendly, knowledgeable staff, in multiple locations in beautiful S. Florida: Miami, South Beach and Fort Lauderdale, near S. Florida's best attractions. Come see why we're the premier cigar superstore for aficionados the world over.

neptunecigar.com



MONTECRISTO AT CAESARS PALACE | LAS UEGAS. NU

Cigar and steak lovers, rejoice for an all-new, exclusive experience at Caesars Palace Las Vegas. The Old Homestead Clubhouse at Montecristo is the only place on the Las Vegas Strip that allows guests to enjoy high-end cigar and whiskey pairings while also indulging on the finest cuts of steak.

ohclubhouse.com



SHELLY'S BACK ROOM | WASHINGTON, D.C.

A distinguished assortment of fine cigars and whiskeys, a state-of-the-art continuous fresh-air system, eight HD TVs, complimentary Wi-Fi, a seasonal outdoor café, and lunch, dinner and late-night menus make Shelly's a D.C. legend! Located two blocks from the White House.

shellysbackroom.com

TO ADVERTISE CONTACT: BARRY ABRAMS 212-684-4896 • BABRAMS@MSHANKEN.COM

figurados_

While most of the Arturo Fuente Hemingway series is wrapped in Cameroon tobacco, Fuente also makes maduro versions of these fascinating perfectos with Connecticut broadleaf wrappers. The Work of Art Maduro scored 92 points. It's made in the Dominican Republic, as is the Cameroon version of the cigar (which happens to be the No. 6 cigar of 2018. See page 56). Forget for a moment that the Punch Rare Corojo Champion doesn't have a Corojo wrapper. Focus on the fact that it scored 91 points and has loads of character. The Ecuador Sumatra combines beautifully with tobaccos from four other countries. It's owned and distributed by General Cigar Co.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

WORK OF ART MADURO

A beautifully curved and tapered perfecto. Firm at first, the draw eventually opens to deliver a rich smoke full of woody, leather and licorice notes that lead to a big chocolate finish.

U.S.: \$8.93 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA,
DOM. REP.
BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PUNCH RARE COROJO CHAMPION

An unusual perfecto with a bulging foot and dark wrapper. Warm and woody, this cigar also brings sweet notes of cocoa, nougat and vanilla before a cedary finish.

U.S.: \$6.29 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CUESTA-REY CENTRO FINO SUNGROWN PYRAMID NO. 9

Powerful first puffs of this pyramid settle down to take on some dusty cocoa notes and the sweet, spicy qualities of tamarind, as well as some hints of coffee bean. U.S.: \$8.70 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full 90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: ECUADOR, NICARAGUA WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

FLORES Y RODRIGUEZ CONNECTICUT VALLEY RESERVE BELICOSO

Gleaming with oils, this dark belicoso, draws and burns evenly, producing a very white ash. Notes of licorice and anise are balanced by a cocoa sweetness and a woody finish.

U.S.: \$16.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 5 3/8"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: BRAZIL

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

LIGA PRIVADA ÚNICO SERIE

FERAL FLYING PIG

A pigtailed perfecto with a dark, oily wrapper. The draw is a bit airy, showing a smoke that's sweet and tarry in the beginning, but develops notes of chocolate, nougat and fresh tobacco.

U.S.: \$19.05 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

MONTECRISTO NICARAGUA SERIES NO. 2

Symmetrically rolled with an even draw and burn. Its woody character is complemented by touches of graham cracker, chocolate and leather.

U.S.: \$12.70 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

> WRAPPER: CUBA BOX DATE: AUGUST 2017

BOLIVAR BELICOSO FINO

A primarily woody belicoso with hints of cinnamon, chocolate and a salty touch of marine brine. Some woodiness recurs on the finish. The ash is a bit flaky.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £22.27 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

AVO SIGNATURE 30 YEARS BELICOSO

The wrapper of this belicoso gleams like well-tanned oil. It's a leathery, earthy smoke with intermittent notes of walnut and raisin, but the charcoal finish is short.

U.S.: \$13.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



U.S.A.

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA FERNANDEZ ANIVERSARIO

The smoke from this long, double-tapered figurado is strong and spicy with notes of leather, pepper and nuts, though a bit of harshness on the finish hurt the score.

U.S.: \$13.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 3/4"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JULY 2016

CUABA TRADICIONALES

PERFECTO

A skinny little perfecto with a pointy tip and wrinkled wrapper. Earthy and toasty, there's also a strong citrus presence of orange peel. The draw is firm at first, but eventually opens up.

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SAN CRISTOBAL QUINTESSENCE BELICOSO

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £13.64 STRENGTH: Medium

Woody and wheaty at first, this belicoso takes on a nutty cashew quality, cedar notes and an underlying earthiness, but a metallic finish offset the score.

U.S.: \$9.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

LA AURORA 100 AÑOS BELICOSO

The weak draw of this belicoso imparts a rather thin smoke with a prominent citrus quality. Notes of fresh tobacco and wood also come through, but the finish is dry.

U.S.: \$16.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 66 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

NUB CAMEROON 466BPT

Fat and squarely pressed, this chunky torpedo burns unevenly, but draws well. There are some sweet, pipetobacco notes of vanilla and dried fruit but the predominantly woody smoke leaves the palate dry and chalky.

U.S.: \$8.45 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GLORIA CUBANA COLECCIÓN RESERVA TORPEDO

This large figurado comes to a delightful point at the head. The draw is firm, but delivers a papery smoke with vague notes of sweetness and charred wood.

U.S.: \$8.29 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

panetelas.

Two cigars in this category of long, skinny smokes scored 91 points and they were both made in Nicaragua with mostly Nicaraguan tobacco. The Laranja Reserva line was created by Erik Espinosa of Espinosa Cigars. He built the blend around the Brazilian wrapper, which he fell in love with as soon as he first saw it, instantly intrigued by its aroma and unusual orange hue. As a slim, 38-ring-gauge lancero, the Brazlian wrapper is truly the highlight, playing a bigger part in the taste than any cigar in the Laranja line. It's made at Espinosa's La Zona factory in Estelí. The Vegas del Purial is brought to us by Felix Mesa, who makes the brand at his El Galan Cigars S.A. factory. The brand is named after the farm where his grandparents grew tobacco in the Cuban province of Las Villas. It's a relatively new brand that came to market in October and is covered in an Ecuador Sumatra wrapper. As a company, El Galan has only been in business since 2013, but the Vegas del Purial Lancero is a welcome new addition to the world of cigars, especially in the panetela category, which, despite its dedicated following, still struggles for shelf space.



NICARAGUA

LARANJA RESERVA LANCERO

91

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: BRAZIL This lancero has the sweet, bready qualities of a saffron brioche bun punctuated by hints of orange peel, a touch of earth and a graham cracker finish.

U.S.: \$9.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

VEGAS DEL PURIAL GRAN RESERVA

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7" LANCERO

The wrapper of this pigtailed lancero has the rich hue of

milk chocolate. It draws well, imparting a sweet and savory

FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

smoke with notes of gingersnap and a cocoa-like finish.

U.S.: \$9.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

LA FLOR DOMINICANA DOUBLE LIGERO LANCERO MADURO

89

FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

Though combustion is clean and even, the draw is tight. First puffs are pleasantly sweet with cinnamon, baking spices and licorice. Earthy notes usher in the herbal, tea-like finish.

U.S.: \$11.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



U.S.A.

LA PALINA COLLECTION MR. SAM LANCERO

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

The draw of this attractive lancero is notably firm, but still imparts a licorice-like smoke balanced by notes of dried fruit, leather and nuts.

U.S.: \$12.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 6"

FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

An earthy panetela with some straw-and-hay notes that result in a distinct barnyard quality on the palate along with touches of ripe banana and vanilla.

U.S.: \$18.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

DAVIDOFF SIGNATURE NO. 2





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: HONDURAS

KRISTOFF MADURO LANCERO

Dark and veiny with a pigtail cap and closed foot. A rough start of burnt toast and charred earth becomes sweeter with notes of molasses and brown sugar.

U.S.: \$8.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/4" FILLER: DOM. REP., PERU, NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP.

LONG LIVE THE KING

MY STYLE IS JALAPEÑO
First puffs of this dark and streaky lancero show rich
notes of nuts, molasses and burnt marshmallow before

a stony, slate-like finish.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

L'ATELIER LAT LANCERO

Covered in a clean wrapper and topped with a pigtail cap, this lancero is a predominantly woody smoke with scattered hints of sweetness, charcoal and an herbal finish.

U.S.: \$9.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ROCKY PATEL SUN GROWN MADURO LANCERO

Though seemingly packed solid with tobacco, this lancero draws and burns quite openly and evenly. It's a woody smoke with notes of black pepper, tea and a dry, charry finish.

U.S.: \$9.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: CAMEROON

LA FLOR DOMINICANA CAMEROON CABINET LANCERO

A woody, grassy lancero with hints of minerals and fruit that leave the palate feeling a bit dry. The draw and burn remain even throughout.

U.S.: \$11.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CAIN F LANCERO

The tight draw of this lancero produces a rather thin smoke. It's an herbal cigar with some sweet notes of milk chocolate, but the mineral finish leaves a chalky sensation on the palate.

U.S.: \$6.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

85



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: FCLIADOR

MY FATHER LA GRAN OFERTA LANCERO

A veiny lancero with a three-seam cap. It's floral and perfumey with some acidic undertones and a woody, gummy finish.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

85



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2" FILLER: COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

GRAN HABANO COROJO NO. 5 LANCERO

The almond and licorice notes of this pigtailed lancero become waxy and acidic with bitter hints of tar and a damp, mossy finish.

U.S.: \$8.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

petit coronas_

The petit corona is a quaint little format that, when blended properly, can offer the satisfaction of a cigar twice its size. In the world of handmade cigars, it's considered one of the more traditional smokes. But, like with many traditional cigar sizes, the appreciation for petit coronas has been fading for awhile. Although Cuba has undoubtedly jumped on the thick cigar bandwagon, Habanos S.A. is still taking its small cigars seriously, as is shown by the tasting here. The Bolivar Coronas Junior scored 93 points, one of the highest-scoring cigars of the issue. It possesses the strong, earthy qualities of a larger, quintessential Cuban Bolivar but does so in condensed form. The small 42 ring gauge certainly allows for plenty of savory notes, but also concentrates the spice, making the cigar bracing and vibrant. In Cuban cigar factories, this size is referred to as a perla, and it shares its exact dimensions with the Cuban Partagás Short, which scored 91 points. Both have a similar spicy intensity, though the Partagás Short enjoys popularity that Bolivar doesn't, as it's a larger, global brand and can be found in most La Casa del Habano shops in Cuba.



CUBA

FILLER: CUBA

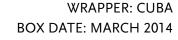
BINDER: CUBA

BOLIVAR CORONAS JUNIOR

Perfectly rolled with a flat head and clean wrapper. It's a leathery, earthy smoke with a strong coffee bean character and a sweet-and-spicy finish of dark chocolate and dried jalapeños.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £12.13 STRENGTH: Full

93



RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 3/8"

CUBA

PARTAGÁS SHORT

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 3/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4 1/4"

FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA,

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 1/4"

FILLER: HONDURAS, PANAMA

BOX DATE: MARCH 2017

Toasty and woody at first, this little smoke gets strong quickly, loading the palate with heavy notes of nutty marzipan, espresso beans and a ground red pepper spice.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £12.57 STRENGTH: Full

91



HONDURAS

COLOMBIA

7-20-4 FACTORY 57 DOG WALKER

A petit corona that delivers big notes of strong coffee, earth and black pepper. Hints of rye bread and semisweet chocolate also emerge. Strong and heavy for such a small cigar.

U.S.: \$6.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



HONDURAS

BINDER: ECUADOR

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: COSTA RICA

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET PUNK

A dark petit corona that imparts an interesting combination of herb and spice notes ranging from saffron and clove to cinnamon and mint, all brought together by its woody core.

U.S.: \$5.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP., MEXICO **BINDER: MEXICO**

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

MACANUDO CAFÉ PETIT CORONA

Tan and petit with a full draw, this little cigar offers a nutty, woody smoke with background notes of espresso and brown sugar.

U.S.: \$6.19 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/8" FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: OCTOBER 2016

ROMEO Y JULIETA ROMEO NO. 2 (TUBO)

A skinny, veiny cigar with easygoing notes of flowers and herbs balanced by spicy, peppery undertones and sweet hints of caramel and cocoa.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.50 STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

FONSECA NICARAGUA PETIT CORONA

Oily and box pressed with a near-black wrapper. Strong notes of wood and licorice underscore the cigar's sweeter, vanilla-like qualities and graham cracker finish. U.S.: \$5.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE PETIT CORONA

Rolled in a coarse, scaly wrapper, this little cigar draws easily, imparting a woody, herbal smoke that carries hints of toffee before a graphite finish redolent of pencil lead. U.S.: \$4.94 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2016**

COHIBA SIGLO I (TUBO)

The draw of this petit corona is slightly firm, but the burn is even. Initial puffs are rich and substantial with nuts and toast, but flavors lose a good amount of intensity. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £19.20 STRENGTH: Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 4" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

OLIVA CONNECTICUT RESERVE

PETIT CORONA

A golden-brown little corona with a fruitcake sweetness that hints of molasses and brown sugar, though the burn is inconsistent and the finish is earthy. U.S.: \$5.28 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 4" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: ECUADOR** WRAPPER: MEXICO

E.P. CARRILLO INTERLUDE MADURO CARRILLITOS

Covered in a dark, toothy maduro wrapper, this tiny smoke is strong and earthy with touches of sweet nuts and caraway seed. The finish is dry and papery. U.S.: \$3.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 4 3/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

IOYA DE NICARAGUA ANTAÑO 1970 MACHITO

The sweet, licorice notes of this dark petit corona are offset by hints of bitter woods. It burns evenly but the draw is a bit tight.

U.S.: \$5.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 4 1/2" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: BRAZIL WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

LIGA PRIVADA NO. 9 SHORT PANATELA

The dark wrapper of this petit corona hints at the excessively charry character of the smoke, which carries notes of burnt earth, charred oak and over-roasted coffee.

U.S.: \$9.18 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

robustos.

A cigar doesn't have to be a powerhouse to be delicious. In addition to richness, sometimes complexity, elegance and refinement are the understated qualities needed to make a cigar stand out. These may seem like haughty words for tobacco, but they are quite fitting for the Warped Serie Gran Reserva 1988 Robusto, which scored 94 points the highest of the issue. It's named for the birth year of brand owner Kyle Gellis. Two cigars scored 92 points. The Archetype Strange Passage is a four-country blend made in Honduras for the California-based Ventura Cigar Co. Made in Cuba, the Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2 is widely appreciated for its subtlety, aroma and balance.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

WARPED SERIE GRAN RESERVA 1988 ROBUSTO

Rich impressions of malty chocolate, coffee bean and earth unfold with each puff of this well-made robusto. It's complex and delicious with an even draw and burn. U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

94



HONDURAS

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, **HONDURAS** BINDER: HONDURAS

ARCHETYPE STRANGE PASSAGE **SHORT ROBUSTO**

Sweet, warm notes of chocolate and toast set the tone for this box-pressed robusto, which also imparts a nutty, nougat sweetness and a salty hint of leather. U.S.: \$9.59 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

92



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 47/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 2

Floral and nutty, this well-made cigar also shows notes of leather and toasted almond before a sweet, honeyed finish. Elegant and balanced.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £22.30 STRENGTH: Medium

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: MEXICO

SAN LOTANO REQUIEM MADURO ROBUSTO

Covered in a dark, inky wrapper, this box-pressed robusto draws and burns evenly. Its complex, sweet notes of raisin and chocolate-covered almonds are accented by cloves and baking spices. U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA

TATUAJE FAUSTO FT114 SHORT ROBUSTO

Draped in a dark-brown wrapper, this well-made robusto has an earthy, coffee bean character with touches of spice, chocolate and dried fruit. WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$7.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ONEOFF ROBUSTO

The woody core of this reddish-brown robusto is framed by notes of honey, red pepper and crushed pistachio. A sweet-and-spicy cigar.

U.S.: \$14.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

PADILLA CRIOLLO-98 ROBUSTO

There's a reddish-brown tinge to the dark wrapper of this cigar, which is a predominantly bready, nutty smoke with notes of wood, earth and vanilla.

U.S.: \$7.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES SOBERANO

Attractively box pressed, this robusto has an even draw and burn. The smoke is sweet, with cocoa, almond and graham cracker qualities, though the finish becomes a bit herbal. 90

U.S.: \$14.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JUNE 2017

ROMEO Y JULIETA SHORT CHURCHILL (TUBO)

À flat-headed robusto with a healthy-looking, medium claro wrapper. Floral at first, this cigar becomes earthy and spicy with big notes of walnut and a bit of maple syrup.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £23.10 STRENGTH: Medium

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF, DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, ECUADOR BINDER: INDONESIA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROOM101 FARCE IT IS A ROBUSTO

U.S.: \$10.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

The dense, chewy smoke of this robusto brings on notes of sweet mesquite, spicy wood and black pepper. The draw is open, the burn, dead even.

90



U.S.A.

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

DON PEPIN GARCIA ORIGINAL INVICTOS

The draw of this dark robusto is notably firm, but still imparts a bright, toasty smoke with a fairly rich cocoa sweetness.

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: MEXICO

ROMEO SAN ANDRÉS BY ROMEO Y JULIETA ROBUSTO

U.S.: \$8.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

A near-black robusto topped with a round head. The earthy, nutty smoke shows additional notes of coffee and anise before a strong, dark-roasted coffee finish.

U.S.: \$9.35 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

ASHTON ESTATE SUN GROWN

21-YEAR SALUTE

A nutty and slightly tangy robusto with notes of pear and licorice that lead to a woody finish. The cigar draws and burns evenly.

U.S.: \$18.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

88



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: MEXICO

THE OSCAR MADURO ROBUSTO

The cap seams atop this dark robusto are separating. Big notes of wood overwhelm the palate leaving little room for the vague hints of leather and coffee.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

TOP SCORES, VALUES AND STRENGTH | BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 148

17/2/12

TOP SCORES

94 Warped Serie Gran Reserva 1988 Robusto
Nicaragua • \$9.00 • Robusto • Medium-Full



93 Bolivar Coronas Junior

Cuba • £12.13 • Petit Corona • Full



93 Fuente Fuente OpusX Reserva d'Chateau

Dominican Republic • \$15.30 • Churchill • Full



Archetype Strange Passage Short Robusto

Honduras • \$9.59 • Robusto • Full



Arturo Fuente Hemingway Work of Art Maduro

Dominican Republic • \$8.93 • Figurado • Medium-Full



Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2

Cuba • £22.30 • Robusto • Medium



La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Reserva Beso

Nicaragua • \$9.25 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



Padrón Family Reserve No. 45

Nicaragua • \$27.10 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



TOP VALUES

Alec Bradley Black Market Punk

Honduras • \$5.95 • Petit Corona • Medium-Full



Macanudo Café Petit Corona

Dominican Republic • \$6.19 • Petit Corona • Mild-Medium



Q Fonseca Nicaragua Petit Corona

Nicaragua • \$5.30 • Petit Corona • Medium



Arturo Fuente Petit Corona

Dominican Republic • \$4.94 • Petit Corona • Medium-Full



Q7 Oliva Connecticut Reserve Petit Corona

Nicaragua • \$5.28 • Petit Corona • Medium

MILDER CIGARS

Ashton Cabinet Selection No. 8

Dominican Republic • \$12.00 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

Macanudo Café Petit Corona

Dominican Republic • \$6.19 • Petit Corona • Mild-Medium

O Davidoff Signature No. 2

Dominican Republic • \$18.90 • Panetela • Mild

E.P. Carrillo New Wave Connecticut Gran Via

Dominican Republic • \$8.30 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

Rocky Patel Vintage 1999 Connecticut Churchill

Honduras • \$10.10 • Churchill • Mild

MEDIUM-BODIED CIGARS

Punch Rare Corojo Champion

Honduras • \$6.29 • Figurado • Medium

Vegas del Purial Gran Reserva Lancero

Nicaragua • \$9.20 • Panetela • Medium

Padilla Criollo-98 Robusto

Honduras • \$7.50 • Robusto • Medium

Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series Soberano

Nicaragua • \$14.80 • Robusto • Medium

Romeo y Julieta Short Churchill (Tubo)Cuba • £23.10 • Robusto • Medium

STRONGER SMOKES

Alec Bradley Prensado Lost Art Churchill

Honduras • \$12.50 • Churchill • Medium-Full

CAO Nicaragua Matagalpa

Nicaragua • \$6.59 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full

△ Laranja Reserva Lancero

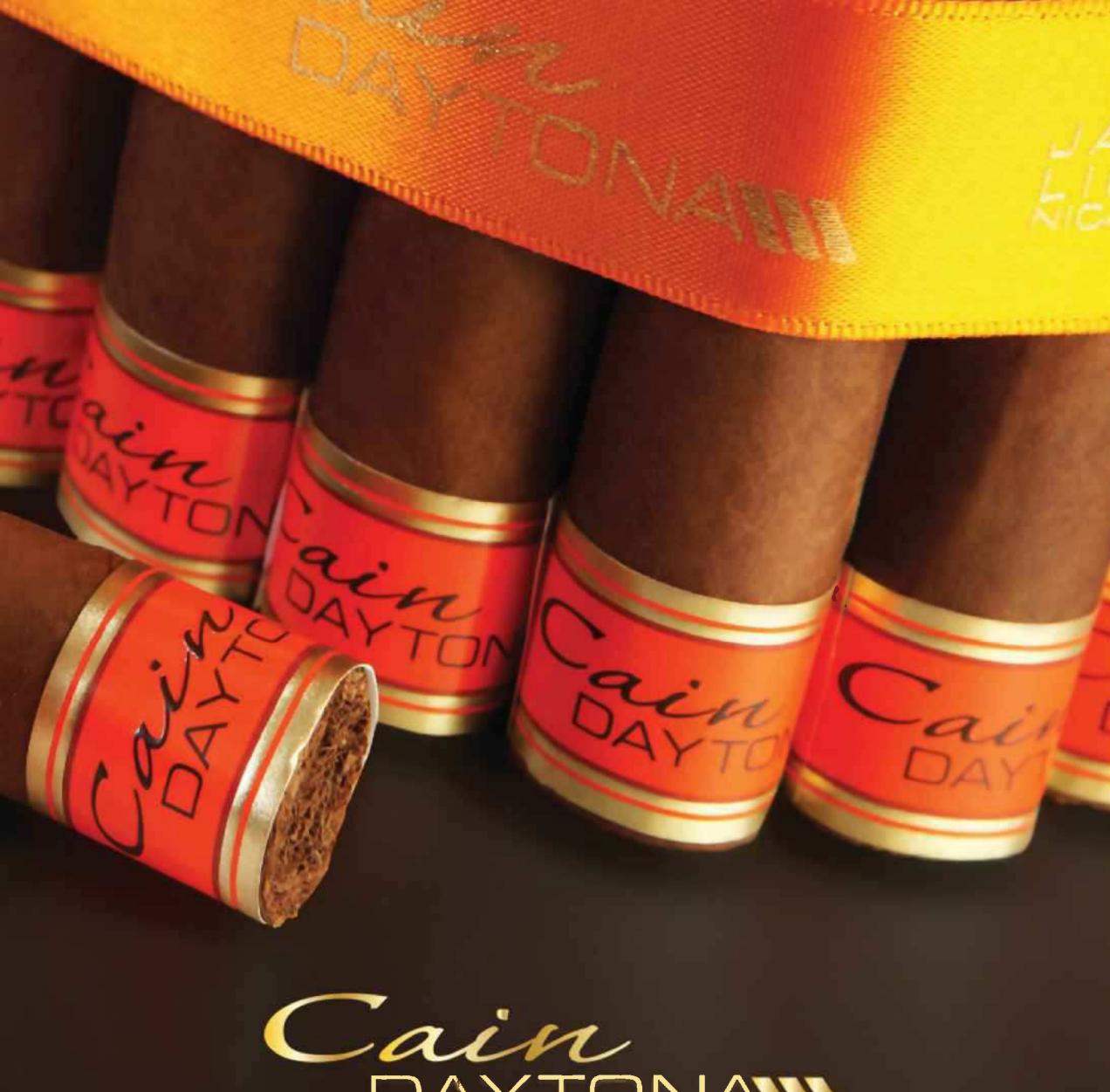
Nicaragua • \$9.90 • Panetela • Medium-Full

Partagás Short

Cuba • £12.57 • Petit Corona • Full

Bellas Artes Maduro Robusto

Nicaragua • \$9.50 • Corona Gorda • Full



DAYTONAM

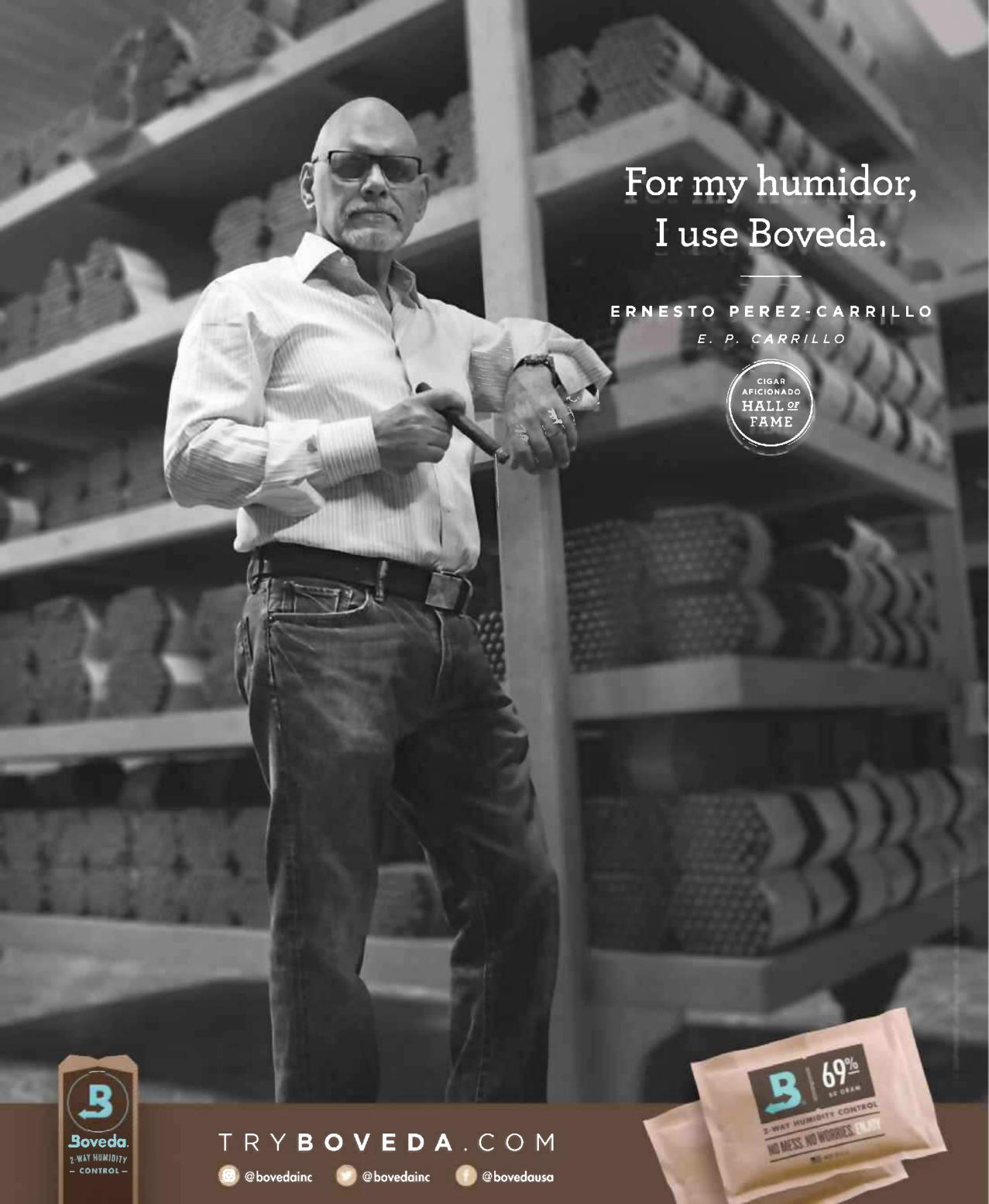
The Jalapa ligero is more refined than other ligeros. Jalapa ligero, plus Cain's triple fermentation makes Cain Daytona a medium to full-bodied, smooth, rich, and flavorful smoke







www.olivacigar.com



A TASTING OF VINTAGE CIGARS





96 TRINIDAD FUNDADORES (2009)

While not covered in the most pristine wrapper, this 10-year-old Trinidad sings a song of sweetness with base notes of caramel, a mid-palate of almond-studded vanilla nougat and a slightly spicy upper register of gingersnap. Transitions from note to note are subtle, appearing on the palate individually and then harmonizing in concert. A slow-burning cigar that takes its time. —*Gregory Mottola*



95 BOLIVAR CORONA GIGANTE (1994)

Another example of a discontinued Cuban Churchill, and what a shame, for this big smoke is gorgeous, with a supple, chocolate-brown wrapper. The smoke is quite earthy, fairly bold, and somewhat dry, with lots of cocoa powder and almond along with a hearty mineral quality. Twenty-five years of age have tempered some of that trademark Bolivar spice, but it still has plenty of power. —David Savona



94 LA FLOR DOMINICANA 2000 SERIES NO. 1 (1999)

This lonsdale is nearly 20 years old, and it sports a dead-even burn, its white ash contrasting against the dark, toothy Cameroon wrapper. The smoke is mellow and nuanced, offering notes of honeyed tea, cinnamon and toasted almond. Further into the smoke, the woody note gets stronger. A balanced and elegant cigar from the past. —David Savona

Drago's Return

DOLPH LUNDGREN IS BACK, BUT THIS TIME THE ROBOTIC RUSSIAN BOXER FROM *ROCKY IV* HAS DROPPED THE CARTOON VILLAIN ACT

BY ALEJANDRO BENES ■ PORTRAITS BY JIM WRIGHT

etective Jack Caine blasts through the door. He's blond. He's tall. As his right leg rises, his foot meets the face of the bad guy holding up the liquor store. The robber drops like a sack of potatoes if a sack of potatoes had just been roundhouse karate kicked by Dolph Lundgren, playing the rule-breaking vice cop in 1990's, *I Come in Peace*.

"It looks perfect in the movie," explains Lundgren, a former European karate champion who stands 6'5". "If you look at that kick, it totally looks like it hits, 'cuz it *is* a hit." Lundgren says he slipped and the other actor wasn't exactly where he was supposed to be.

"Between him missing his mark and me slipping, I clocked him right in the head." Lundgren chuckles.

Lundgren has been in 70 movies, mostly in roles that call for him to be physical and violent. You probably know him best for his monosyllabic turn as Ivan Drago in 1985's *Rocky IV*, when he was 28. That's the one in which Drago, the Russian semi-automaton boxer who speaks only nine lines of dialogue in the whole movie, manages to kill Apollo Creed in a boxing match. Seeking revenge, Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) enters the ring against the nearly expressionless giant, a product of Soviet science who

punches at a preposterous 1,850 pounds per square inch. As they meet in the ring, Drago utters, "I must break you." As fists begin to fly, it seems that he will. Drago flings Rocky around the ring like a rag doll, landing punch after punch.

"Rocky Balboa is in serious trouble!" the announcer yells. "They might have to stop this one before somebody gets killed!"

Come on, man! Haven't you seen the other *Rocky* movies? In the end, Rocky has avenged Creed's death and knocked out Drago—and by extension Communism—with the Soviet politburo looking on. Now, more than three decades later, Ivan Drago is back, this time in *Creed 2* (which hit theaters in late November). Lundgren has been busy, also appearing as King Nereus in the superhero film *Aquaman*, which came out December 21.

"Sly [Stallone] and I stay in touch," Lundgren, now 61, says about how Drago's return came to be. "So, he talked to me about Drago and told me it was a sort of 'sins of my father' story."

But the negotiation dragged on, and in the meantime, Stallone stepped back from directing the movie. "I met with Steven Caple [the new director] and the actor [Florian "Big Nasty" Munteanu, a boxer] who was going to play my son. He's a big Romanian guy. Caple rewrote the script and made it



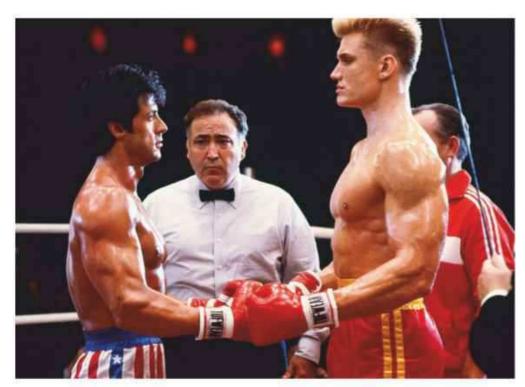
more interesting than even *Creed*, and even more so for my character. You know, I didn't want to play a cartoon cardboard villain again. I did that and I'd rather not do it again."

Lundgren laughs as he lapses into the comic-book Russian accent from *Rocky IV* to explain that Drago—"He is not human. He is machine"—is in this latest incarnation "more human. It was 180 degrees different approach from before. This is more gritty. More real. Even the boxing matches. There's no crazy stunts."

"I end up in fights outside the ring," Lundgren allows. "My fight is with the Russians who kicked me out and with Rocky and his lot, who kind of destroyed my life. That's how I look at it."

Lundgren was eager to explore Drago's pain.

"The character is a more tortured character," Lundgren says.
"It was fun, but it was draining. His whole life was taken away



Lundgren is best known for playing the immensely powerful Soviet boxer Ivan Drago, who took on Sylvester Stallone's Rocky Balboa in *Rocky IV* (top). Lundgren reprised his role last November in *Creed 2* (right).

from him after he lost. Then the Soviet Union fell apart and he was living a really, really meager existence. Mentally, I prepared a guy who had struggled against the odds all these years. This was something I could relate to."

Lundgren grew up with a father who was "sophisticated," a man who taught him how to smoke cigars, but who also abused him both physically and verbally.

"You end up in a situation where you can't run away. You can't fight back," Lundgren says. "That energy that was all caged up, I used it to become a karate champion. I had this killer instinct. I never wanted to give up."

Lundgren used his troubled relationship with his father to prepare for his return as Drago.

"In this role, I'm playing him," Lundgren says. "And my son is playing me in my real life."

In real life Lundgren is much more complete than the violent characters he plays on screen. He's actually downright friendly. Walking into V Cut Smoke Shop on Melrose Avenue, Lundgren is still tall and muscular, though, dressed in a casual blue jacket and jeans, not as imposing. His still very blond hair is cut short. He is greeted warmly by the V Cut guys and Lundgren erupts into a big smile. His baby face has turned a little more rugged with age, and

he speaks softly with a slight Swedish lilt as he hears about some of the "special stuff" the V Cut guys "always have" for him. Lundgren likes good cigars and enjoys more of them while shooting movies.

"If I'm on a film set, I smoke more because there's just nothing to do." When shooting in the U.S., his go-to is a Davidoff Grand Cru from the Dominican Republic, but he has an affinity for Cuban cigars that began 25 years ago when he got married. His now ex-wife had grown up in Marbella, Spain.

"We ended up buying a house there, which I still have. There, people smoke a lot of cigars so I got into it more. I started liking the Cubans, the Cohibas, Partagás and those."

Lundgren allows that his palate tends towards lighter cigars. "I like them kind of mild, and when you smell them they should smell a bit sweet and honey and light. Montecristo is a little too harsh. So, Cohibas and Partagás are pretty much my favorites."

Lundgren stays with Cubans while shooting abroad.

"I smoked a lot for a while, especially in Montreal where I did a lot of movies and you get a lot of good cigars. I think I smoked four cigars a day. Small ones."

When at home in Los Angeles, Lundgren visits The Palm. "It's really a guy thing. You know, the classic steak, a New York strip,



with a baked potato and a really good wine. And then a brandy or a sambuca. Fernet-Branca is my favorite. It's all part of a ritual and the cigar finishes it up quite nicely. For a while I smoked Romeo and Julieta Churchills. It's a special occasion cigar."

Occasionally, Lundgren smokes with Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, his costars in more recent flicks. "It's a guys' thing," he emphasizes. "I think some of the younger guys on *The Expendables* took up smoking because Sly smokes, Arnold smokes and I smoke. It's kind of pleasant to smoke a cigar together."

While he still puffs plenty of cigars, Lundgren has cut out most sugar from his diet, and has been working with a trainer to help his metabolism and strength after two hip replacements. The action star now has four meals a day, but smaller ones.

"As you get older, your vices kind of go out the window. You can't eat as much, you can't drink as much. A cigar is one of those things you can do as you age. I usually smoke once a week in LA. I used to go to Caffé Roma in Beverly Hills with Sly and Arnold. The Montage is pretty good too."

NICARAGUAN LOVE STORY

To create a truly superlative cigar, you must begin with the highest quality and most esteemed tobaccos available. The new Romeo y Julieta 1875 Nicaragua is derived solely of choice, hand-selected leaves, harvested from the rich, volcanic soils of Nicaragua. Throw yourself into the latest chapter of America's love story. 100%. Vicaraguan ROMEO Y JULIETA

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigars Are Not A Safe Alternative To Cigarettes. Follow the love story at:
www.romeoyjulietacigars.com
@ @romeoyjulieta_usa

GRAND JOUR

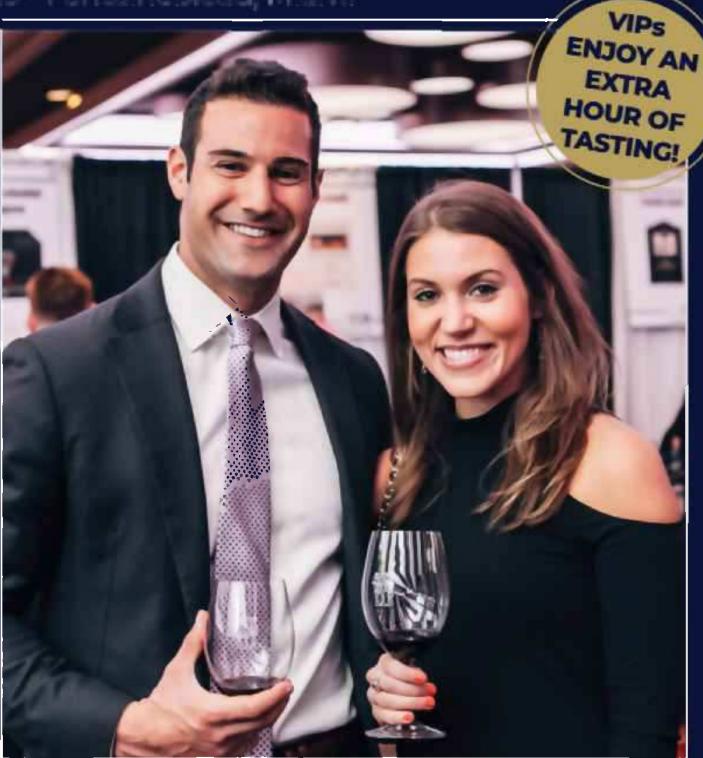
April 27, 2019 - The Mirage, Las Vegas | May 2, 2019 - Navy Pier, Chicago

May 10, 2019 - Fontainebleau, Miami









3 Vities. 3 Spectacular Wine Tastings!

Enjoy an evening of 200+ exceptional wines from the world's best wine-growing regions in three exciting locations. All wines are rated 90 points or higher by Wine Spectator's editors. Meet the winemakers, enjoy a delicious selection of food and take home a souvenir Riedel wine glass!

Buy Tickets at GrandTour.WineSpectator.com

Tickets Starting at \$200

undgren's well-documented story is one of hard work and recovery. He channeled energy from that abused child-hood into karate, ice hockey and weight training. He also became a juvenile delinquent in Stockholm—drinking too much and stealing motorcycles. As a result, he was sent to northern Sweden to live with his grandparents. At 18 years of age, Lundgren came to America to study.

"I remembered something my dad had told me," Lundgren explains, noting that people are complicated. "My dad was this pretty smart guy, he was very charming, he was a nice guy most of

the time when he wasn't going nuts. And he told me, 'Listen kid, this socialistic country [Sweden], forget it. You can't do anything here. If you want to be somebody, you've got to go to America.'"

Lundgren received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Washington State University. He has another bachelor's from the University of Stockholm and a master's in chemical engineering from the University of Sydney (Australia). While there, he worked as a bouncer, channeling his "trauma" and karate skills. He also got more scholarships, among them a Fulbright to study at MIT.

"There was just one little snag," Lundgren recalls. While he was working a concert, he was spotted by Grace Jones, the Jamaican-American actor/singer.

"I didn't really realize right away why she'd picked this tall, blond, buff guy to be her special security," Lundgren reminisces. "But, you know, I found out later that evening. I ended up in a hotel room, missed a few classes the next day. She was a world-class artist,

totally out of my league. That's what I thought, but she didn't agree. So, we ended up having this relationship."

Jones, who played the henchwoman in the 1985 James Bond movie *A View to a Kill*, helped Lundgren get his first movie role. No lines. He's a KGB agent, seen in the background as a KGB general talks with bad guy Christopher Walken. The choice confronting Lundgren was to pursue chemical engineering or hang out in New York with Jones and the likes of Andy Warhol, Michael Jackson and David Bowie. He spent only three weeks at MIT. Then he got the part of Drago in *Rocky IV*. That, Lundgren says, is when his troubles really started. While he was finding success in LA, his demons returned.

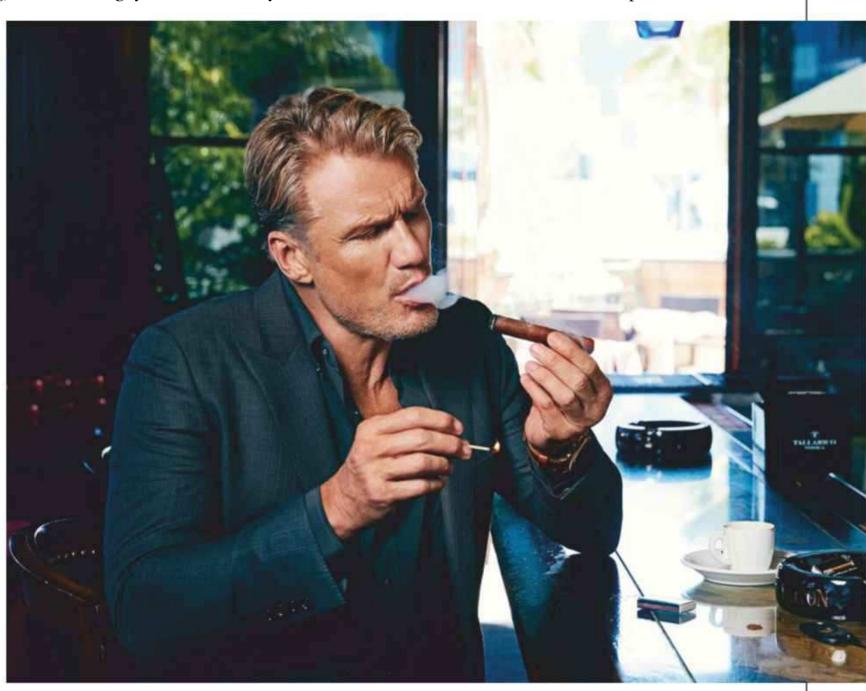
"I did a lot of bad things to myself," things that included a failed marriage and two daughters whom he says didn't really know their father. "And, 25 years later, 40 movies later, yeah, I was a movie star, but I was miserable most of the time," Lundgren

told a "TED Talks" audience in 2015. Stallone to the rescue. Lundgren imitates Stallone.

"'Hey, Dolph, how are you doing? I've got this script, so check it out, see what you think.' Well, the script was called *The Expendables*. It was a big hit, I was back on the big screen after 15 years."

After another relationship, Lundgren got into therapy and the fog began to lift.

"You relive your experiences, you cry, scream, you roll up in a little ball, you hit the couch with a baseball bat. I could sort of see my life come back to me. And the meditation helped as well."



He sought and received forgiveness from his daughters (whom Lundgren claims enjoy the smell of cigars because the aroma reminds them of him). He forgave his father. He began, he says, "this new life." And he saw others in pain. Lundgren has dedicated a significant part of that new life to helping them. In 2014, he wrote and starred in the movie *Skin Trade*, about human trafficking.

"I had to play this character in the film where my daughter gets kidnapped and put in a cage. So when I got back to the States I checked out a few organizations. Now, he raises money to support CAST, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking. Giving back has been its own kind of therapy for Lundgren.

"If you heal yourself, you can heal others," he says. "If you do that, it's just the greatest feeling in the world."

It takes a smart and tough guy to make that journey. ❖

Alejandro Benes is a frequent contributor to CIGAR AFICIONADO.

FLORIDA'S TROWN

riving through Clermont, Florida, on a crisp spring morning in his pickup truck, Jeff Borysiewicz steals another look at his phone and furrows his brow. He's worried. It's perhaps the third time he's checked his mobile device since leaving his Corona Cigar Co. superstore on Sand Road in Orlando 30 minutes ago. Borysiewicz isn't concerned about traffic. Rather, he's uneasy over the 10 to 15 mile per hour easterly wind and overnight

temperatures that dipped to almost 40 degrees Fahrenheit, cool for this time of year.

"I never really worried about the weather before, except for hurricanes. But now..." His voice trails off, and he takes a puff of his cigar. A little over six years ago, Borysiewicz's primary focus was his chain of highly successful cigar retail shops. Today, though, he owns the only tobacco farm in Florida that is capable of growing cigar-quality tobacco. And just yesterday morning, he and his team planted about 2,000 fragile Cuban-seed tobacco seedlings in the earth, with plans to add more today.

The drive through Clermont—a town located in the center of Florida—feels similar to other American suburbs. Couples walk their dogs on clean sidewalks and wave hello to one another as they pass, automatic sprinklers water the vibrant green front lawns of the evenly spaced houses, and a procession of about 20 antique vehicles from the early-1900s approach in the opposite lane. Borysiewicz slows down to watch. He waves and beeps the horn a couple times. The drivers nod back and smile with pride.

The Sunshine State was once a major grower of cigar tobacco and the cigarmaking capital of America.

Today, two companies are determined to restore the state's cigar heritage

BY ANDREW NAGY
PORTRAITS BY JOSH RITCHIE

On the surface, Clermont may seem like just another quiet residential area that has surrendered to big-box stores. But not too long ago, the city boasted a thriving citrus industry and still offers plenty of fertile farmland. For Borysiewicz (pronounced BOAR-shuh-wits), it was the perfect area to revive the state's once proud tobacco-growing heritage. Since 1996, he has been growing his retail cigar empire into one of the United States' largest, with four stores in Florida that encompass roughly 22,000 square feet and sell millions

of cigars each year. But in 2012, he developed an idea: He wanted to grow cigar-quality tobacco in Florida, something that hadn't been done since 1977.

Despite people calling him crazy, Borysiewicz purchased 20 acres of farmland in Clermont and established Florida Sun Grown LLC in 2012. After a soil analysis, he improved the farm's sandy soil by adding an irrigation system and a little agricultural lime to boost the ph levels. He then prepared two plantations, and built a curing barn. In March 2013, he planted his first test crop, half of it grown from Criollo '98 seeds, the other half Corojo '99. He got the seeds from Eduardo Antonio Fernández Pujals, the owner of Aganorsa, a major force in the world of Nicaraguan tobacco. Borysiewicz wanted Cuban-seed varietals, he says, because "Cuban-seed tobacco is like Cuban people: It's tough, it's resilient and it can take weather." In total, he and a team of temporary day laborers planted 5,000 seedlings of each varietal.

The idea to do two seed types came from Fernández. "He was like, 'Plant them both. Then you'll have a test crop to see which





A sight that has become uncommon in the United States: a field of fine cigar tobacco. This crop, in Clermont, Florida, is the work of Jeff Borysiewicz.

seed varietal works better," says Borysiewicz. "We did that, but I was totally unprepared. I never grew tobacco and had zero help as far as someone being there that ever [grew tobacco] before. But, I'd been on many farms, and Eduardo would go back and forth with me on what I should do. We sort of had the cookbook, but never actually made a cake before."

When Borysiewicz refers to that 2013 test crop, he calls it "wild," meaning it was grown using only water but without the aid of added nutrients and herbicides. This helped him determine what type of agricultural pressures he would have to overcome, stresses such as foliar diseases and destructive insects.

"Once you know what you are dealing with, you know how to spray for it," he says. His number one pest has been grasshoppers, which he keeps at bay with spray and a wall of sugarcane that abuts the dirt road next to his fields. Borysiewicz also encountered a nasty fungus that spread whenever the soil was kicked up, and fortunately he found a natural remedy: a weed called nutsedge. He used to kill it, but after he discovered it kept the dust from kicking up, he let it grow between the rows.

It's an example of how Borysiewicz realized that there is no step-by-step system to become a successful tobacco farmer. Microclimates and soils are too specific to certain areas. What works in one country doesn't necessarily work in another. So Borysiewicz had to experiment and learn what works best for his fields. Since his first crop, Borysiewicz has battled all manner of pests and perils. He's even survived a hurricane.

"Irma came through, and that was a Category 5. I was scared on that one," Borysiewicz says. The eye was forecast to go directly over his farm. Adding to Borysiewicz's stress level was the fact that he is unable to purchase crop insurance since, being the only cigar tobacco farmer in Florida, there is no pool to spread the

risk. Worried about his curing barn full of tobacco, a structure literally held together only with sheet metal screws, Borysiewicz rented two U-Haul trucks.

"My crew and I, we busted our ass packing all [the tobacco] and putting it in the trucks," he said. Borysiewicz parked the trucks in the open field that night. "By midnight, they showed the track going right over the farm... I really expected the roof of the barn to be gone, like a sardine can." But fortune was with Borysiewicz, as the storm left little damage behind.

His biggest challenge, though, is cost of labor, which he says can be about four times per acre than what it costs to grow in Central America. Additionally, Borysiewicz struggles to find workers who understand the nuances of tobacco growing, since it's a crop that almost zero Floridian agricultural laborers are familiar with.

After devoting 16 years to establishing a highly successful retail operation, why suddenly decide to pursue the life of a tobacco grower at the age of 50?

"Since I was a kid I was into farming," he explains. Though his head of dark hair and pointy beard are now speckled with bits of gray, Borysiewicz still has the barrel-chested build and forearms of a man who clearly enjoys getting his hands dirty doing physical work. He was born in Chicago and moved to Ocoee, Florida, with his family when he was six. By 13, he was earning cash as a laborer in a local orange grove. "I was making six dollars an hour, cash. But the coolest thing is I was driving around the orange grove on a big diesel tractor, which to me made it all worth it," he says, beaming.

So while Borysiewicz possessed an affinity for farming, his family didn't own any land and so he was never able make a career out of it. Still, he never lost the bug, and when he began traveling to Central America for his cigar business, it was the farms, not the factories,

that always interested him the most. He enjoyed surveying the tobacco in the fields and asking the growers questions.

Borysiewicz's infatuation with farming may have kickstarted the idea to farm, but it was Florida's rich history of tobaccogrowing that solidified his decision.

Florida's cigar tobacco culture began in the 1820s when a pioneer named John "Virginia" Smith settled in Gadsden County, just over the Georgia border. Smith originally intended to take his family and a group of settlers farther south, but one of his wagons broke down. He decided to stay when he realized the sandy soil was ideal for cultivating cotton and subsistence crops, but also for growing the Cuban tobacco seeds in his possession. Soon after, the settlers realized that the silky tobacco they grew with

an appealing spotted appearance was wrappergrade quality. By 1845, Gadsden County was growing 1.2 million pounds of tobacco and shipping it to the booming cigarmaking industry in the Northeast as well as overseas.

The Civil War delivered a big blow to the region's tobacco industry. The North's blockade stopped shipments, but more importantly, ceased operating capital from going South. The industry survived, though, and after the war, recovery slowly began. Then in the 1880s, Florida farmers experimented by planting Sumatra seed, a hot commodity at the time. Cigarmakers not only loved the flavor of Sumatra, but also its workability. Sumatra's small central vein and thinness meant it provided more square feet of usable wrapper per pound.

Almost overnight, Florida Sumatra-seed tobacco revolutionized the state's cigar-leaf industry. Buyers proclaimed Florida Sumatra

superior to actual Sumatra, and it gained a reputation for being distinct from Cuban-seed tobaccos grown in Connecticut. Soon, New York companies started investing heavily in Florida's tobacco industry, and by 1890 Florida tobacco production reached 1.5 million pounds, according to the comprehensive 2003 thesis "Shrouded in Cheesecloth," by Robert T. Pando of Florida State University. The state's tobacco industry was chugging along, but it had one more innovation up its sleeve: shade-grown tobacco.

While many believe the concept of growing tobacco under shade was conceived in Connecticut, its birthplace, according to multiple sources, was actually Florida. As the story goes, the heads of Schroeder & Bon, a New York firm with investments in Florida tobacco, were fans of the thinner, finely textured tobacco leaf grown in Cuba in the shade of orange trees. Under orders from Schroeder higher-ups to try the method in Florida, D. Alexander Shaw in 1896 experimented by planting Sumatra seeds on a small plot shaded by orange groves near Quincy, located in Gadsden County. The shade-grown Sumatra was thinner and more flavorful than the Sumatra grown in the sun, and the next year, he expanded his trial to a larger plot. The results were again stellar. Shaw applied for a patent (which would later be rejected) and established a company to build slat-shade structures.

In 1898, Schroeder & Bon's Florida operation would end up cultivating 100 acres of shade-grown Sumatra, enough to bring to

market. In 1900, a Florida employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture named Marcus L. Floyd would be moved to Connecticut to experiment there with the shade-grown method, where it turned into a major enterprise. The Connecticut River Valley would later become synonymous with shade, fields of white blanketing much of the lands east and west of the river.

Beginning in the 1920s and lasting through World War II, Florida produced more than 25 percent of the shade tobacco grown in the United States. The good times, though, began to dwindle due to a complicated mix of rising labor costs, market consolidation and cigar companies choosing to switch to cheaper, homogenized wrapper leaf. Another contributing factor to the demise of the Florida tobacco industry was the long decline in

handmade cigar consumption.

After the U.S. passed the Cuban Embargo, Cuban tobacco growers such as Angel Oliva escaped to Florida and Connecticut to try and continue cultivating tobacco. At the time, green candela was the most popular cigar wrapper, but the embargo shut off all tobacco trade with Cuba, the supplier of candela. The new candela tobacco crops were promising at first, but soon, consumer interest shifted from green to natural-wrapped cigars. The last Florida candela crop was grown in 1977.

Borysiewicz's desire to reestablish Florida cigar tobacco, however, was not solely inspired by his appreciation of history. Taking a cue from the locavore movement, Borysiewicz believes smokers will gladly pay a little more money for a cigar that contains tobacco grown nearby. So in 2016, he partnered with Drew Estate to create the Florida Sun Grown cigar brand. The four-

size, regular-production line is rolled in Nicaragua with a Brazilian wrapper, Habano-seed binder from Honduras, and fillers from both Nicaragua and Borysiewicz's Florida farm. A limited-edition Toro scored 88 points in the July 10, 2018 *Cigar Insider*.

nicaragua

The most ambitious project to include Borysiewicz's Florida tobacco, though, is not one of his own brands, but rather a creation from J.C. Newman Cigar Co., Tampa's oldest cigar factory.

For those who know Tampa today, it can be difficult to fathom that it was once the center of America's handmade cigar industry. In 1886, when Key West was the biggest producer of cigars in Florida, Vicente Martinez Ybor and Ignacio Haya shifted their cigar production from Key West to Tampa, which had a population of only about 1,000 people. By 1900, the population ballooned to 16,000, mainly with immigrants from Cuba, Spain or Italy. Most worked in one of the city's 151 cigar factories, which produced nearly 500 million handmade cigars per year. At that time, tobacco from all over the world was being imported into Tampa, including Connecticut, Florida and even Cuba, with some 205 million pounds coming in from the island nation.

The boom times are long gone. The Great Depression, rising labor costs in the United States and a host of other factors forced many of Ybor City's cigar factories to close long ago. Now, many buildings that once were cigar factories are vacant or in various



stages of "revitalization." Some small shops still roll handmade cigars, but the new businesses are geared toward today's fashionable hipster: trendy cafés pour nitro-injected coffee, bars serve up intensive cocktail concoctions and craft beer, with a couple skateboard stores thrown in, seemingly for effect.

One reminder of the glory days still remains: a stately red brick building with a handsome clock tower that looms over the neighborhood. Built in 1910 for cigar production by E. Regensburg & Sons, a famous cigarmaker who wanted to relocate from New York City, for decades locals counted on the clock tower's hourly chimes to schedule their day. El Reloj (Spanish for "the clock") has been the headquarters of the J.C. Newman Cigar Co. since 1953.

The factory is far from dormant. Here, brothers Eric and Bobby Newman oversee pro-

duction of bargain brands made on ancient machines that date back to the 1910s and still require many workers to operate. But more importantly, the Newmans are once-again rolling handmade cigars at El Reloj, a brand called The American that uses Borysiewicz's Florida tobacco.

The American is an audacious project, admits Drew Newman, general counsel for J.C. Newman and the son of Eric. He has a small, wiry build similar to his father's, with keen, intelligent eyes and a full beard. The American, he says, was originally rolled in New York City by Regensburg in the late-1800s and became the first cigar rolled in the El Reloj factory when it opened. With his wife, Ariel Peters, Newman had been ruminating on the idea of reblending The American as a cigar made entirely from heirloom tobaccos grown in the United States.

"Our fourth-generation business started 123 years ago when my great-grandfather went out behind his house into a barn and rolled 500 cigars by hand," Newman says. "Rolling handmade cigars is how we got started. It's how we had made cigars for decades, and I wanted to go back to our roots as a company and show and honor this history of American premium cigarmaking."

Finding the right tobacco wasn't easy. "We looked at Kentucky fire cured, perique tobacco in Louisiana, and even some tobacco from Wisconsin. But it wasn't right," he says. When he heard



The American by J.C. Newman is rolled in the U.S., and made entirely with American tobacco. The cigar is the brainchild of Drew Newman (above).

about Borysiewicz's farm, he and his father took a trip to Clermont in 2015. "It didn't feel like we were an hour away from Walt Disney World," says Newman. "It become very clear, instantly, that this wasn't a novelty. This wasn't a gimmick; this was a real, premium cigar tobacco farm growing the tobacco the right way. The slow way."

After the visit, Drew struck a deal with Borysiewicz to receive half of that year's crop (the other half went to Aganorsa). "Before Jeff started growing tobacco, we were kind of stuck. There just wasn't enough of a variety of tobacco that could make a really flavorful cigar that wasn't one-dimensional," says Drew. After some trial and

error, the blend was complete. The binder is Connecticut broadleaf grown by seventh-generation farmer John Foster, who also provides some filler from Connecticut Habano seed. Other filler tobaccos come from Mennonite family farmers in Pennsylvania. Borysiewicz's Florida Corojo'99, with a slightly reddish tint and dotted oils, serves as the cigar's wrapper.

The American project takes the Americana theme to a new level. Everything concerning the cigar is made in the United States. The boxes are constructed out of U.S.-grown basswood and are constructed by The Millennium Wood Boxes Inc., a Miami company. The labels are printed by Action Label, a company located in Sanford, Florida, and all of the art and packaging was designed by Glenn Wolk, an artist based in New York City.

More important, though, is that The American is being rolled at El Reloj. For now, only two

rollers are making them, something J.C. Newman hopes to expand, but that's an expensive proposition, as it's cost-prohibitive to make handmade cigars in America. But as Drew points out, the goal of The American was never to make money.

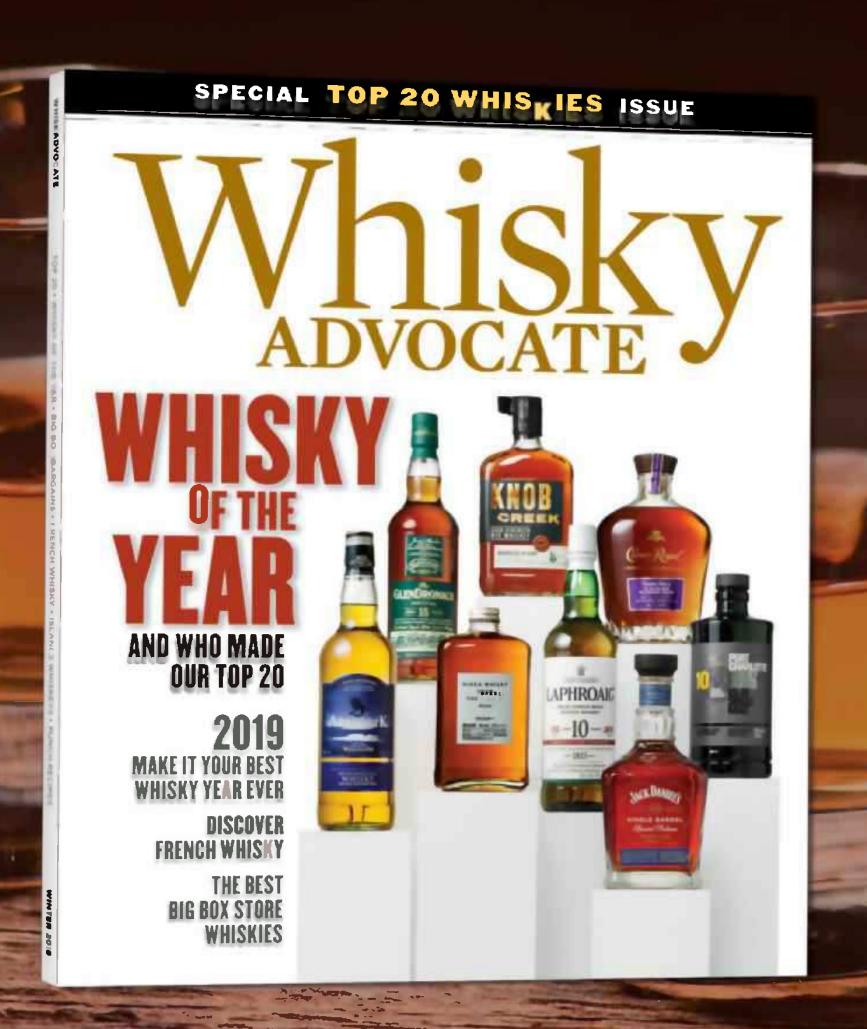
"If it was up to me I wouldn't even sell it. We sell plenty of other cigars," Newman says. "It's more important to me that the cigar gets in the hands of consumers who then really appreciate it for what it is."

The American project is just part of the ambitious plan for turning El Reloj into a destination for showcasing handmade cigars. "As we build out new rolling and aging rooms along with space to bulk ferment tobacco in our Tampa factory, we hope to be able to open up the space for visitors so that cigar enthusiasts can see and appreciate how fine, handmade cigars are made without having to fly down to the Dominican Republic or Nicaragua," says Newman. After a soft launch in 2016, J.C. Newman hopes to ship about 50,000 of The American cigars in the coming months. If things work as planned, two other brands from yesteryear, Admiration and The 1954, will also be made at El Reloj.

Both Borysiewicz and Newman understand that, in today's marketplace, authenticity and transparency are driving demand. And what better story is there than a product, especially a cigar, on store shelves with a label that reads "Made In America?" ��

Discover Your New Favorite Whisky

Every issue features ratings and reviews you can rely on.



Visit WhiskyAdvocate.com to subscribe.

WHEN RESEARCHING HOSPITALS, CONSIDER HOW MUCH RESEARCH THEY DO. Mount Sinai

The research we do today drives medicine we will practice tomorrow. That's why we're very proud to say that during the last five years, Mount Sinai has ranked among the top four medical schools in the country in research dollars per investigator. Which hospital you choose can make all the difference in the world. mountsinai.org



Hefty Havanas

Cuban cigars are getting thicker and thicker each year by Gordon mott

wenty years ago, the thickest cigar coming out of Cuban cigar factories had a ring gauge of 52. Today, Cuba has 30 cigars that come in at 56 ring gauge or wider, including the Cohiba 50 Aniversario cigar, at 60. And the response to the global trend toward thicker cigars led by consumers and cigarmakers for the U.S. market is planned to grow.

Habanos S.A. co-president Luis Sánchez-Harguindey Pardo de Vera says that the Cuban cigar monopoly is going to keep pursuing its strategy of producing fat cigars because that's what consumers around the world are asking for. Walid Saleh, managing director of Phoenicia Trading A.A., which distributes cigars throughout the Middle East, says his customers love them. "This is definitely a trend in our area," Saleh says.

The infatuation with girth isn't universal, however. Asian market sources report that because of cultural and historical considerations, most consumers there still haven't jumped

on the thick-cigar bandwagon. Norio Hattori-Paris, who works for Pacific Cigar Company Ltd., the main distributor of Cuban cigars in Asia, says that consumers who buy the fatter gauge cigars do so "mostly just to have them in their collections." He adds that the majority, including himself, still prefer traditional sizes, and if they want a bigger cigar they opt for a double corona (with its relatively slim 49 ring gauge) or a Churchill (47).

But Habanos keeps rolling out new sizes that push past the 50-ring-gauge boundary. In September, the Hoyo de Monterrey Le Hoyo de Rio Seco (5 1/2 inches by 56 ring gauge) was launched in Lebanon as a regular-production extension of the Hoyo de Monterrey brand. Another high-profile 2018 addition is the Romeo y Julieta Grand Churchill, which, at 7 1/2 by 56, is one of



Havana has been busy making thick cigars. A trio of chunky new Cubans, from left: Cuaba 20 Aniversario (56 ring), Cohiba 50 Aniversario (60) and Trinidad Topes EL (56).

the longest of the thick cigars in the Cuban portfolio. It's a limited-edition cigar, as are many of the other thick smokes, such as the Partagás Salomones, a 6-by-57 smoke made for La Casa del Habano retail shops, and the Cohiba Robustos Supremos Edición Limitada 2014 (5 by 58).

In 2017, the only fat Cuban cigar announced was the Bolivar Mundiales (61/3 by 56), which will come in a 115th anniversary humidor. But 2016 was a banner year for thick Cubans, with four cigars sporting ring gauges of 56 and fatter: the Bolivar Tesoro (7 1/4 by 57), a Regional Edition Salomon made for Germany; the Cohiba Majestuosos 1966 (5 7/8 by 58) a limited-edition Cohiba made for the brand's 50th anniversary, which came in an ornate humidor; the Cuaba 20 Aniversario (6 3/4 by 56), which will also come in a special humidor; and the Trinidad Topes (5 by 56), an Edición Limitada.

But the star of the 2016 releases was the Cohiba 50 Aniversario, a 60-ringgauge smoke that—up to now—is the

widest cigar ever produced in modern-day Cuba. Also known by its factory name, Grandioso, it's 7 inches long and is extremely rare, having only been sold as part of the Cohiba 50th anniversary humidor, of which only 50 were made, each containing 50 cigars, for a total global run of 2,500 cigars. The No. 1 humidor was auctioned at the 2016 Festival del Habano and fetched approximately \$350,000 at the time. The other 49 humidors were auctioned to the main Habanos distributors around the world, with a base price of \$227,000. Others have sold for even more.

Most of Cuba's global brands now have a 56-ring-gauge cigar or bigger. H. Upmann has the Magnum 56 (6 by 56) and the Supremas No. 2 (7 by 58), Partagás the Partagás 170 (6 3/4 by 56). And no one expects this fat cigar trend to stop anytime soon. ❖

moments to remember

Please send all submissions to: CIGAR AFICIONADO/Moments to Remember, Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10019. Or email them to: momentstoremember@mshanken.com. To order additional copies of CIGAR AFICIONADO, call 1-800-344-0763.



John and Crystal Rokos celebrate their wedding day by lighting up some of Cuba's most elusive cigars: Cohiba Behike. The couple savored these fine smokes with John's father, "Papa" Rokos, at Linwood Estates in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.



Daniel Marcucci, winner of the 11th annual All In For A Cure poker event, receives congratulations from event co-chairs Tory Gregory, left, and Richard Salmon, right, at the Grand Havana Room in Manhattan, New York.



Ralph Frickel and Gracie Bozick puff on Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2 cigars at the Peninsula Hotel in Manhattan, New York.



Jake Kimmelman commemorates his wedding to Jenna Heckler in style, lighting up fine cigars with family and friends on the waterfront in Newport, Rhode Island. From left to right: Brian Kimmelman, Sam Kimmelman, Michael Kimmelman, Nick Kossoff, Andrew Kossoff, the groom, Jesse Kimmelman and Michael Kossoff.



Louis "Lou" Anthony Conter, retired Lieutenant Commander of the United States Navy and *USS Arizona* survivor, remembers Pearl Harbor with his adoptive sons Jim Conter, Jack Kennedy and Paul Bright in Oahu, Hawaii.



Good friends Corinna Butowski, Beth Borst and Mia Marzion live the good life as they sip libations while enjoying the pleasures of a handmade cigar gathering at the sixth annual Brew City Cigar Festival in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Cigars, drinks and sunshine. What more could you ask for? Jim Smith, Scotty Corerre, Rick Petrie, Scott MacFarlane and Chumley Pissarro light up in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida.



Ballantrae Golf Club Ladies Champion Bok Stamper shows husband Kyle Stamper, nephew Chris Emerson and friend Tom O'Connell how to play golf and smoke a cigar in Pelham, Alabama.



Founding members of the Red Tail Cigar Club light up handmade cigars on the 11th green of the Red Tail Golf Club in Avon, Ohio. From left: Tom Vaughan, Jack Kuhn and Dennis Rush.







Kurt Reis, Ismael Rodriguez, Manny Reis, George "G-Man" Santos and Terrance Palmer enjoy a round of handmade cigars at Maneeley's Banquet & Catering in South Windsor, Connecticut.



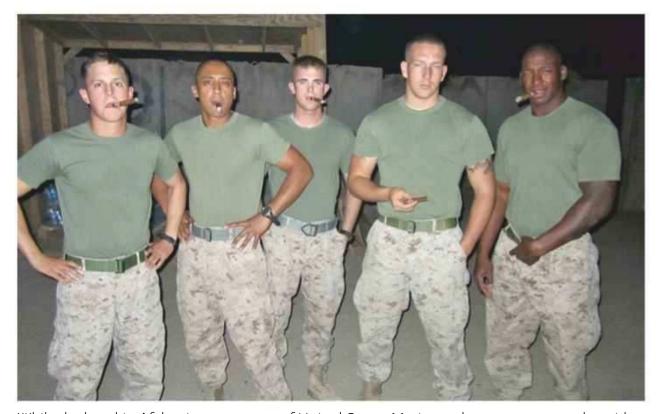
Tim Postlethwaite, Jewel Want, Eric Goldman, Rick Kroos, Christine and Mike Sorhage and Rafael Sanchez mark the birth of Dennis Lopez's first grandson with cigars in Oldsmar, Florida.



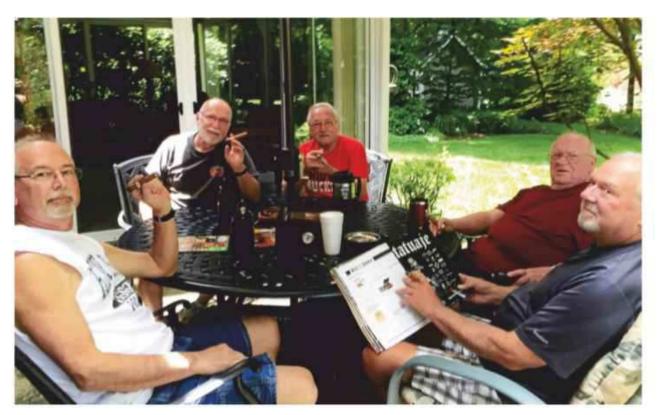
Members of the Shriners society light up cigars after lunch in Springfield, Massachusetts. From left: Steve Scarcelli, Mike Russell, Mark Scarcelli, Bill Russo, Steve Pavlak and Thor Wessell.



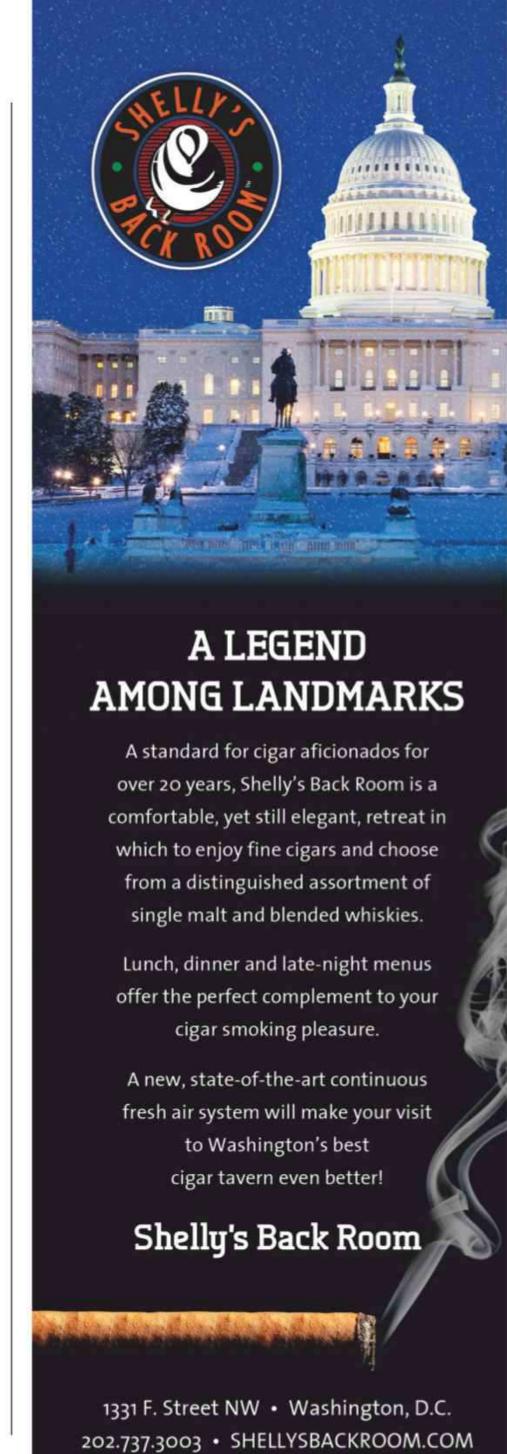
Bobby and Patty Johnson commemorate their 10th wedding anniversary alongside friends Liz and Billy O'Shea with a round of smokes and an excellent view atop Mt. Pilatus, Switzerland.



While deployed in Afghanistan, a group of United States Marines take a moment to relax with cigars. From left to right: Kyle Stephens, Jose Trochez, Kyle Sullivan, Brett Jones and Eric Benoit.



Gary Sander, Robert Snode, Claude Paumier, Tom Hackathorn and Frank Pugnale relax with handmade smokes and tasty libations during their weekly cigar social in Louisville, Ohio.





Friends and family savor handmade cigars to honor bride and groom Karlyn and John Church at their special wedding reception in Denver, Colorado.



Newlyweds Vlada Zdravkovic and Brianna Schmidt Zdravkovic mark their wedding day with Cuban cigars and California wine in Napa County, California.



Paul Cravens, Tom Caywood and Dwight Price travel from Lexington, Kentucky, Friends Tye Raagner, Gord Cooper, Todd Duncan and Ray Shewchuk puff on to Havana, Cuba, to celebrate their 60th birthdays with excellent Cohiba cigars. handmade cigars while camping on Brae Island in Fort Langley, Canada.





Tim and Diane Mahoney light up at the Excellence El Carmen hotel with cigar store manager Jorge Bautista Pollantis in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.



The family that smokes together stays together. Carlos Solórzano and stepdaughter Tatiana Palma Vaughan savor cigars in Managua, Nicaragua.

CIGAR AFICIONADO (ISSN #1063-7885) is published bimonthly by M. Shanken Communications, Inc., Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019. (212) 684-4224. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Address changes and subscription inquiries: CIGAR AFICIONADO, P.O. Box 37367 Boone, IA 50037-0367; call 1-800-365-4929; or email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com. Subscription rates: United States, \$24.95 per year; Canada, \$38.00 per year; all other foreign, \$56.00. Subscriptions are payable in U.S. funds. TO ORDER A NEW SUBSCRIPTION, call 1-800-792-2442, email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, or write to aforementioned Boone address. To order back issues, call 1-800-761-4099. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned, and no responsibility can be assumed for such material. All "Letters to the Editor" should be sent to the editor at the aforementioned New York address. All rights

in letters sent to CIGAR AFICIONADO will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and subject to CIGAR AFICIONADO's unrestricted right to edit. CIGAR AFICIONADO® is a registered trademark of M. Shanken Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted or reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the publisher. Copyright © 2019, M. Shanken Communications, Inc. To sell CIGAR AFICIONADO call: 1-800-344-0763.





Friends Cliff Abney, Al Bertieri, Ben Laparne, Theron Tilgner, Kaare Hunt and Mike Dewitt raise a glass to a great evening at Big Smoke Las Vegas.



A packed house: CIGAR AFICIONADO executive editor David Savona speaks to the soldout crowd of cigar fans at the Big Smoke Las Vegas daytime seminars.



Dapper gentlemen James Duplisea, Eric Trammel and David Villaloboso enjoy cocktails and cigars at Big Smoke Las Vegas.

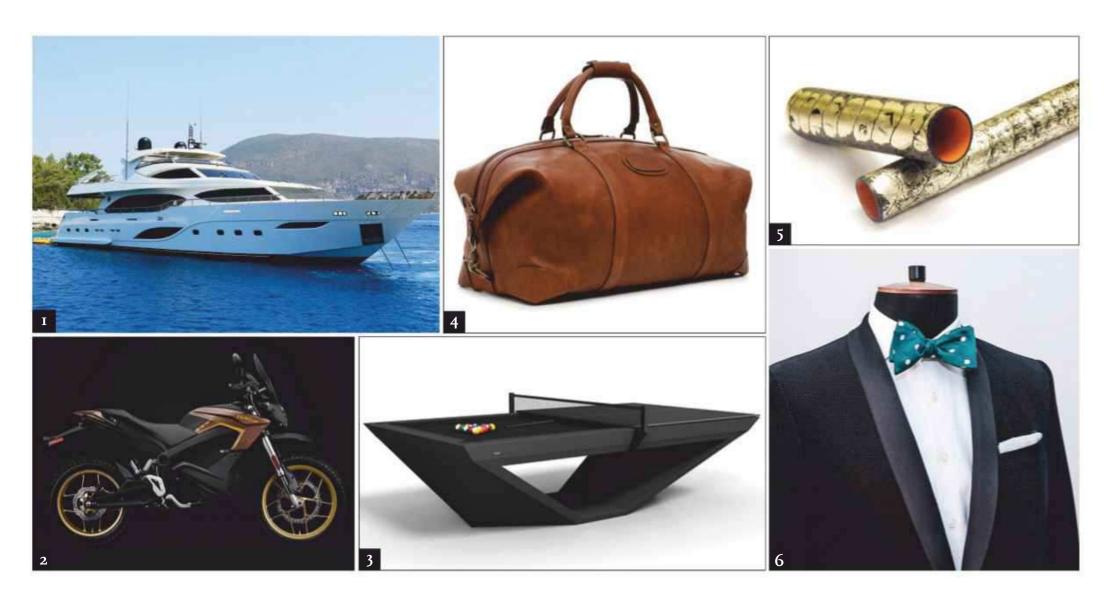
Big Smoke Lights Up Vegas

T t's a Sin City tradition—for the past 23 years, cigar connoisseurs from all over the globe have come by the thousands to smoke, drink and attend educational Les seminars at Cigar Aficionado's Big Smoke Las Vegas weekend. This past November, nearly 4,000 Big Smoke guests took home dozens of premium handrolled cigars, spent the weekend indulging in fine food and drink, and shook hands with some of the best cigarmakers in the industry. The Big Smoke travels next to Hollywood, Florida, on March 23rd. It returns to Vegas November 15 through 17 for another extravagant, smoke-filled weekend. —David Clough



Cigar legend Carlos Fuente Jr. of Arturo Fuente Cigars greets and takes photos with fans at the Big Smoke evening celebration.

made for you



In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

I GREAT ESCAPES—OCEANSCAPE YACHTS

The old saw is the two greatest days in a boater's life are when he buys and sells his yacht. But what if you could have the joys of boating without the headaches of ownership? That's the concept of OceanScape Yachts, sort of a NetJets or Uber for boatsmen. It brings the concept of the sharing economy to the high seas, making use of luxury yachts that would otherwise stand idle. From there, the club works to tailor your sea dream vacation. oceanscape.com

2 GREEN SPEED—ZERO MOTORCYCLES

Zero Motorcycles, a premier maker of electric motorcycles in California, has improved its Zero DS dual road and dirt models for 2019. This year's edition comes with a dual-sport windscreen, tank grips and hand guards to go with its 116 lbs. of torque. A phone app syncs with the bike, allowing you to seamlessly change performance profiles when going from asphalt to dirt. The battery is now good for 163 miles (78 for highway), meaning you'll spend less time charging, and more time riding. *zeromotorcycles.com*

3 ABLE TABLES—11 RAVENS

The dream started with table tennis (see page 44) and soon moved on to billiards, poker and blackjack, shuffleboard and air hockey. The 11 Ravens concept was to eschew rickety ping-pong tables, suitable only for your basement rec room, and make sturdy gaming models better described as furniture. What has followed was a collection of modernistic designs (cantilevering is a frequent element), handcrafted out of scratch-resistant composite materials. Priced from \$11,000 to \$50,000, custom designs are available. 11ravens.com

4 LEGACY IN LEATHER—KORCHMAR

Naples, Florida, is home to Rocky Patel cigars, gorgeous beaches and a 100-year-old company making stunning leather goods in the United States. Korchmar began crafting leather visors for cars in 1917, and later moved into leather business cases. We are fond of its Twain weekender (\$605), a 22-inchlong, full-grain leather bag with brass hardware, an interior lined in twill and outfitted with handy pockets. It's sturdy, stately and perfect for short trips as it's built to fit into an overhead bin, and to last. korchmar.com

5 POCKET ROCKETS—FALLONCUIR

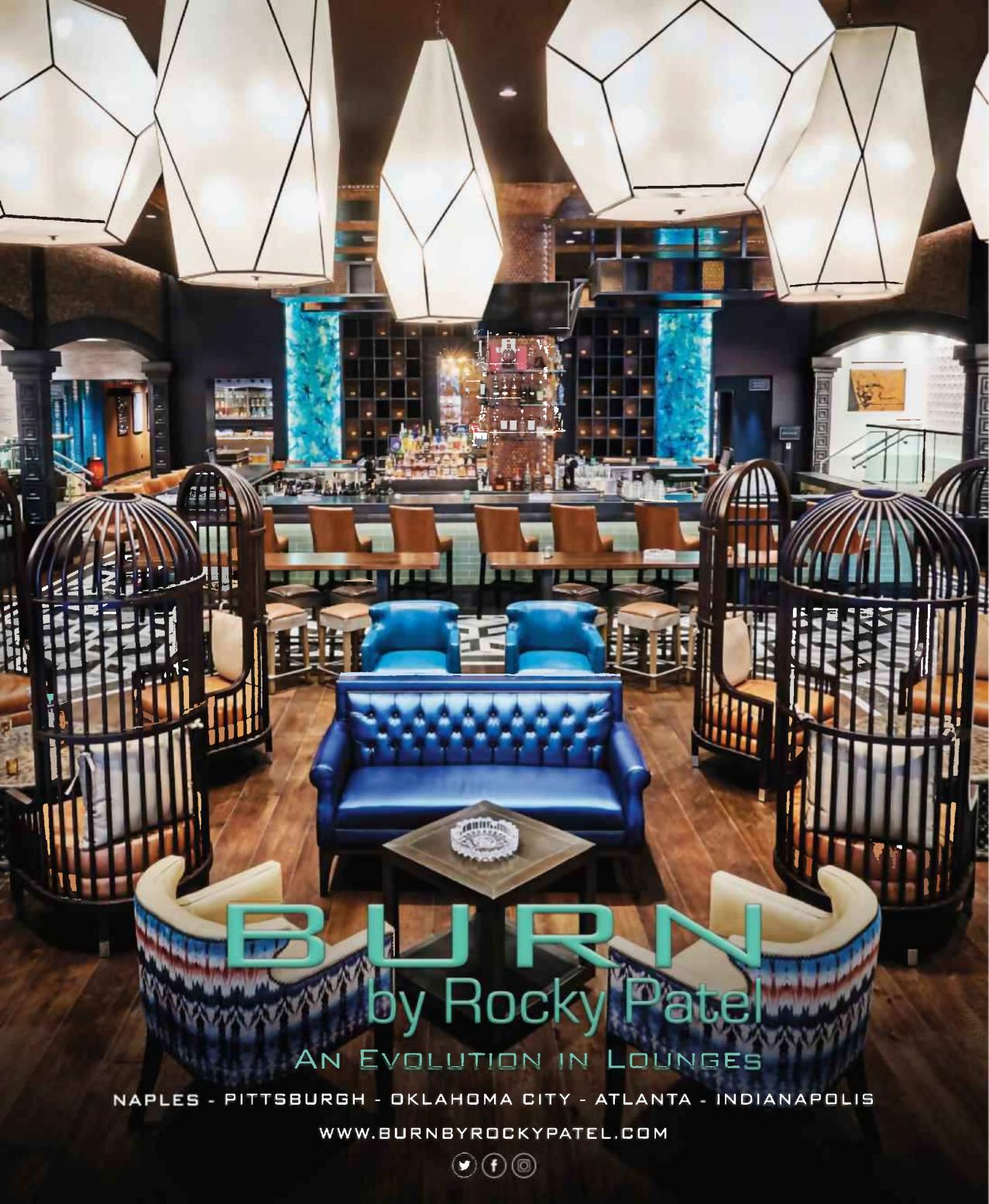
Cigar cases need to be functional, but the best are also artistic statements. Among the exquisite pieces created by the craftsmen at Fallon of France, the EOLE Pocket Humidor stands out for its extravagance. Its brown buffalo leather exterior is enhanced with 23.75 karat gold. Inside is supple leather with a vibrant orange color. The smooth interior coddles your cigar, and the tight seal retains humidity. The company's claim that it will keep a cigar humidified for one week withstood a test in our dry offices. 1,164 euro (\$1,300). falloncuir.com

6 STANDING TALL—LUTWYCHE TAILORING HOUSE

"It's not just about wearing something appropriate, a suit should make you stand tall and feel confident." As a motto it may seem like a mouthful, but when Tony Lutwyche delivers on his sartorial promise it's a game changer. The London tailor's new New York City shop is really a gentleman's retreat that starts with a client assessment based on posture and personality and ends with a timely delivery endowed with the famous Lutwyche detailing. *lutwyche.co.uk*

WELCOME TO WHISKY'S BEST KEPT SECRET





IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

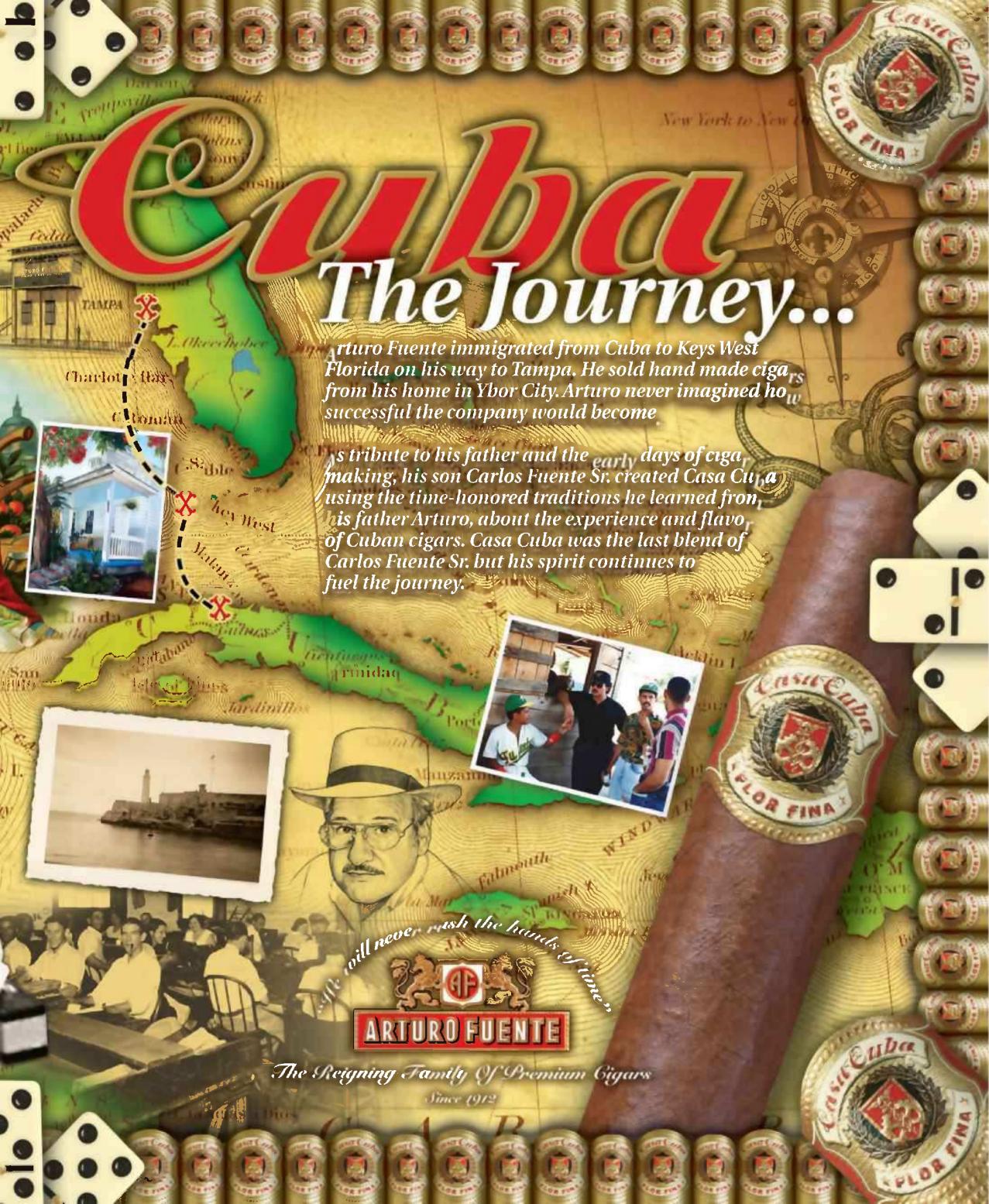
In the matter of Trademark Reg For the mark COHIBA Date registered: February 17, 19		9	
AND			
In the matter of the Trademark For the mark COHIBA Date registered: June 6, 1995			
EMPRESA CUBANA DEL CUBATABACO,		X : :	
	Petitioner,	:	Cancellation No. 92025859
v.		:	
GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.,	,	: :	
	Respondent.	:	

EXHIBIT 26

TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE







With knowledge



comes enjoyment.



ancionado

Magazines for people who are passionate.

TO SUBSCRIBE: goodlife.mshanken.com

PUBLICATIONS OF M. SHANKEN COMMUNICATIONS, INC.



SERIE V

Serie V Especial is a complex blend of Nicaraguan long filler tobaccos. Blended with specially fermented Jalapa Valley ligero, and finished with a Habano Sun Grown Wrapper.

Blending Notes: This cigar is blended to deliver full body taste while maintaining an unparalleled smoothness.

This flavorful blend exhibits complex tobacco with rich coffee and dark chocolate tones.









For more information, visit us at www.olivacigar.com



contents

march/april 2019

up front

- 8 CIGAR HIGHLIGHTS
- II EDITORS' NOTE
- letters 15 OUT OF THE HUMIDOR
- the best 21 THE GOOD LIFE GUIDE
 - 23 CIGARS A case big enough for all your gear.
 - 24 STYLE A guide to shoes in a time of short pants.
 - 27 ELECTRONICS Hasselblad: the modern camera with dignity.
 - 30 TIME Watches that have great peripheral visions.
 - **33** WHEELS The latest Dodge Ram explores new territory.
 - 34 SPORT Keep golfing even when the heavy stuff comes down.
 - 37 DRINK Big Easy cocktails aren't just for Mardi Gras.
 - 38 COLLECTING Great globes put the whole world in your hands.

features

cover 42 THE RETURN OF THE SOPRANOS

Twenty years after TV's first family of organized crime muscled its way onto the small screen, the Sopranos are returning. We look back at the groundbreaking series while looking forward to a feature-length film that puts young Michael Gandolfini in the role made famous by his late father.

golf 58 DESERT FLOWERS

Your guide to golfing in Scottsdale, Arizona. Great weather, easy access and luxury accommodations make it an easy target for golf getaways. And like the saguaro cacti that grow there, these courses have layouts that could only exist on the Sonoran Desert.







ON THE COVER

Twenty years after the debut of "The Sopranos," we look forward to a new story. photographed exclusively for CIGAR AFICIONADO in 2001 by Michael O'Neill



drinks 69 IT'S JAPANESE WHISKY TIME A parade of interesting choices and a Whisky of the Year award make this the perfect time to explore the world of Japanese whisky. By varying techniques and aging vessels, the country has been able to create many single malts and blends of distinction.

dining 76

THE PIPES OF KEENS

Keens Steakhouse, the storied Midtown

Manhattan eatery, not only serves up delicious,

carnivorous indulgences, but displays a

collection of clay pipes that harbor a rich

history taking you back to when smoking

was an important part of fine dining.

cigars

We rate 81 cigars in six sizes: Churchills (88), corona gordas (90), figurados (94), grandes (96), miscellaneous (98), and robustos (100), plus our Buying Guide (102) as well as our vintage cigar tasting, Connoisseur's Corner (104).

industry 107 BY THE NUMBERS

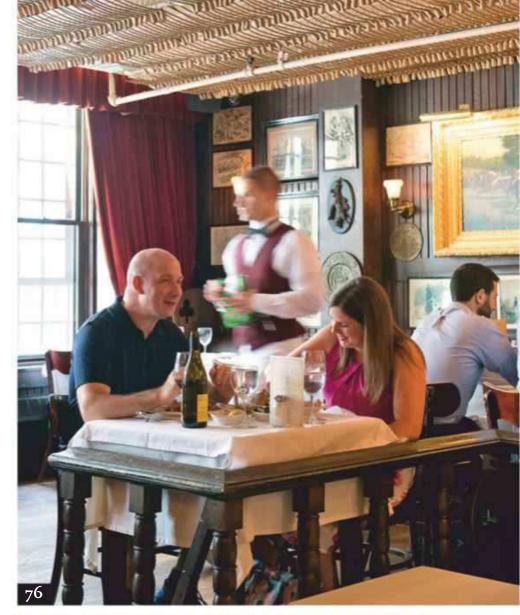
We sliced and diced the stats to tell you what were the highest-rated cigars of 2018, and how they ranked by origin, size and cost.

cuba report II3 HAVANA'S HOTTEST NIGHT

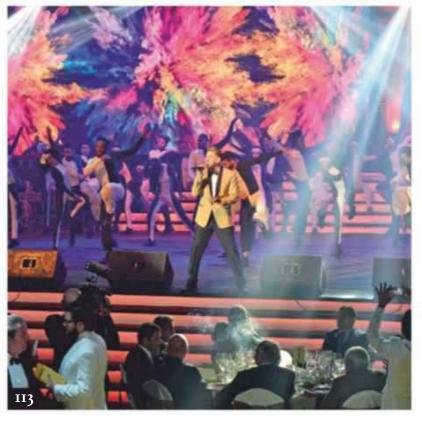
The 21st Habanos Festival closed with a gala dinner that marked Trinidad's 50th anniversary. Festivities included music, dance, awards, auctions and, of course, plenty of Cuban cigars to smoke.

Photos from our readers as they enjoy themselves and their cigars.

Superb steaks, aged and delivered to you; carrying your whiskey on the go; knives steeped in Japanese tradition; custombuilt vacations; the smart watch for the outdoorsman; and a juicer for all cocktails.







highlights

Three cigars in this tasting scored 94 points, near-classic on our 100-point scale and certainly a noteworthy accomplishment. Cigars from either Nicaragua or Cuba took the top spot in every size category. Even more impressive, though, is that 27 cigars scored 90 points or higher. What a time to be a cigar enthusiast.



TOP CHURCHILL

VILLIGER LA VENCEDORA CHURCHILL

This brand was discontinued in 2012 and then it was reblended and released last year as a stronger, Nicaraguan puro.

NICARAGUA

94



TOP CORONA GORDA

HOYO DE MONTERREY LE HOYO DE RÍO SECO

The Hoyo de Monterrey Le Hoyo line once mainly consisted of thinner cigars, but in recent years, Cuba has added thicker smokes like this one to the line.

CUBA

94



TOP FIGURADO

AGING ROOM QUATTRO NICARAGUA MAESTRO

Launched last year as part of a larger brand portfolio overhaul, this all-Nicaraguan cigar is rolled by veteran cigarmaker A.J. Fernandez.

NICARAGUA

94



TOP MISCELLANEOUS

MONTECRISTO PETIT EDMUNDO

This stout little smoke, essentially a shortened version of the larger Montecristo Edmundo, packs a lot of flavor for those short on time.

CUBA

93



TOP ROBUSTO

L'ATELIER LAT52

A complex smoke with a pigtail cap that tied for top robusto with Cuba's legendary Cohiba Robusto.

NICARAGUA

93



TOP GRANDE

LA ANTIGUEDAD TORO GORDO

The filler tobaccos in this cigar hail from three areas in Nicaragua—San Rafael, Las Quebradas and San Jose—all on farms owned by the Garcia family.

NICARAGUA

92



BEST BUY

ASYLUM PREMIUM 44X4

This short and relatively thin cigar retails for only \$6.46. It's rolled in Nicaragua using tobaccos solely from that country.

NICARAGUA

91



BAROMA DE CUBA





A taste from another time



www.ashtoncigar.com

editors' note

The Mob Family We Love

wenty years ago, we met a man named Tony Soprano as he lit up a dark robusto and drove his SUV out of the shadows of the Lincoln Tunnel, heading for his home in the New Jersey suburbs. Television would never again be the same.

This was a new kind of TV character, one we had never seen before. Here was a man capable of unleashing brutal, savage violence one moment and sitting down to a friendly family dinner

the next. He could show his daughter around a college campus in the morning, and strangle the life out of an old associate that evening. In the course of six seasons on HBO, we saw him cheat, lie and steal, with perhaps his most cold-blooded moment coming the night he killed a man he lovingly referred to as his nephew, and watched without emotion as his life slipped away.

This clearly wasn't "The West Wing," "Friends" or "Seinfeld." It was a new form of television, a genre that just couldn't be aired on networks.

No matter how bad Tony Soprano was—and he was bad—we always loved him in the end. There was something about James Gandolfini's portrayal that made this killer someone we enjoyed watching—even while his actions made us cringe. We invited him and his family

into our homes on Sunday nights, week after week for a reason.

We undeniably love "The Sopranos," and not just because this is one of the most cigar-friendly shows ever to air on TV. Its take-no-prisoners style kept us glued to our chairs, and its trailblazing stories paved the way for new antiheroes of television, everyone from Walter White of "Breaking Bad" to Don Draper of "Mad Men."

In this issue, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of "The Sopranos," and find that there's a new chapter to talk about. The show will soon spin off a movie called *The Many Saints of*

Newark, and it will bring us a new look at the earlier days of our favorite crime family. The film will be set in the 1960s, when racial tensions ran high in America. In it we will meet the fathers, uncles and friends of the Soprano clan, even a young Tony Soprano played by none other than Michael Gandolfini, the son of James Gandolfini, who died in 2013 at the age of 51.

Today, the show still resonates. Watch one of the old episodes



Marvin R. Shanken smoking cigars with nine members of the cast of "The Sopranos" in 2001.

on HBO and it will whet your appetite for more of this story, more of this world that fascinates as much as it terrifies. We invite you to read our story about the series, which begins on page 42.

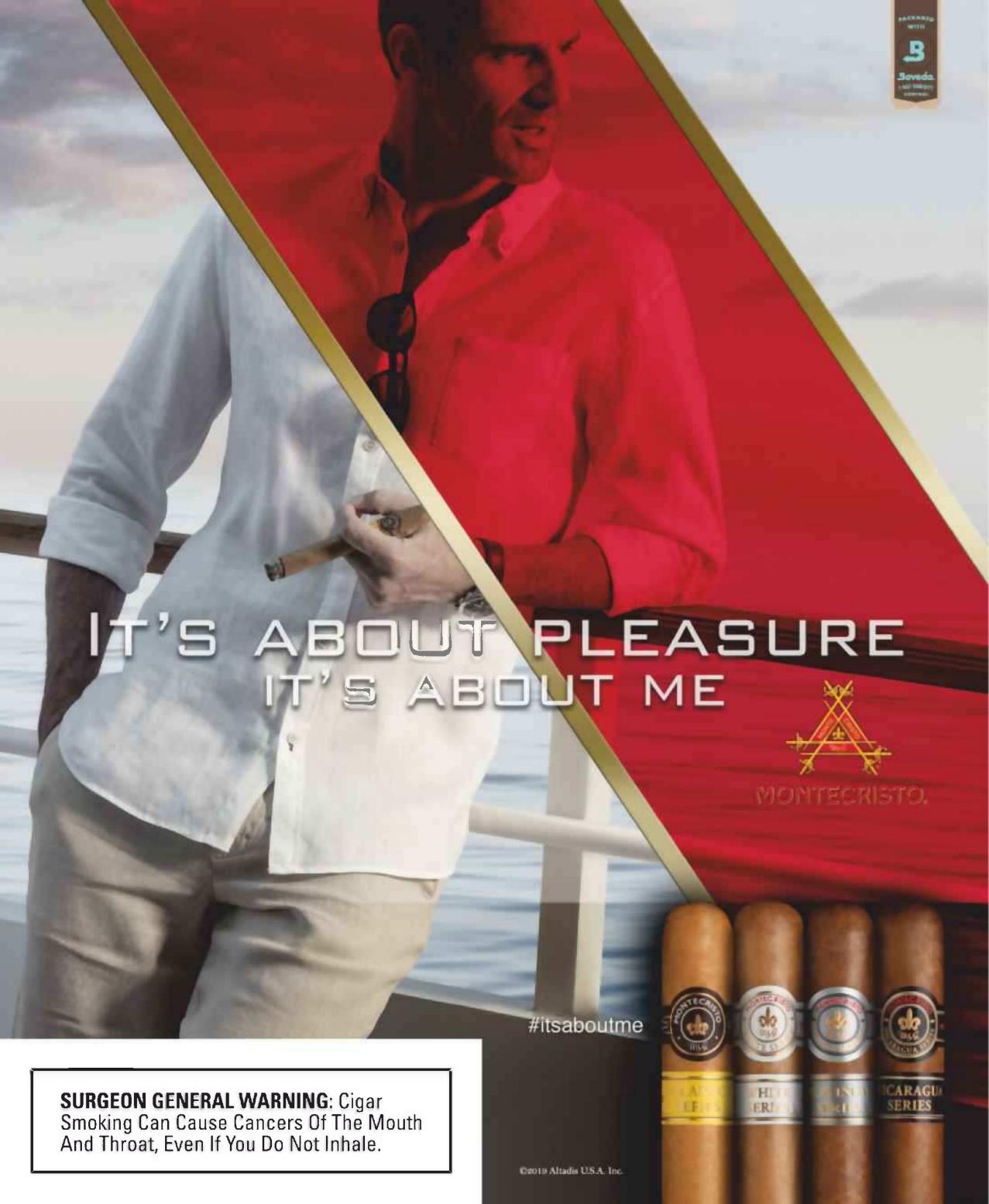
There's much more in this issue: A look at the finest whiskies from Japan, and how they pair with cigars; unforgettable golf in Scottsdale, Arizona; the story of Keens, a steakhouse decorated with tens of thousands of churchwarden pipes; and an in-depth analysis of more than 650 cigar reviews, to show you which cigars are smoking best. All that, and much more.

Enjoy the issue.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN EDITOR & PUBLISHER DAVID SAVONA EXECUTIVE EDITOR







out of the humidor

Dear Marvin,

I am from Cuba, but have lived in Tampa for the last 40 years. I own every CIGAR AFICIONADO that you have published and absolutely love to read your magazine. But there is something missing, most of the time, in your cigar ratings and context. That is the big ring cigars. I know you have the grande category but it is not featured in every issue of the magazine.

Now, almost every brand carries a 6 by 60 cigar in their portfolio and if I have the choice I wouldn't smoke anything less than a 60 to 70 ring size cigar. Even now, the Cuban cigars are getting bigger and bigger.

Can we please have more information on these matters and the ratings of the big ring cigars?

Armando Padron

Tampa, Florida

Editors' Response: Thanks for reading CIGAR AFICIONADO with such faithful devotion. While grandes are certainly prolific enough to get their own category, we aren't sure they're prevalent enough to be in every issue of the magazine—yet. We'll keep our eyes on the trend. We're sure you'll be happy to see that grandes are rated in this issue of the magazine. Turn to page 96.

Dear Marvin,

I just got my issue of CIGAR AFICIONADO listing the Top 25 cigars of the year ["Top Cigars of 2018," February 2019]. I was happy to see Cohiba Siglo VI make it. That, along with the Cohiba Robusto, were my favorite cigars when I was working overseas.

Reading the list reminded me of a question I've wanted to ask you for a while. You have prices next to each cigar rated. Are these prices that certain cigar merchants sell these cigars for? The reason I ask is whenever I receive my copy of the magazine, I make a list of cigars I want to try. I take the list to my cigar shop but very rarely does his price match yours. In most instances, his prices are higher. My real question here is: Where can I get these cigars at these prices?

Tony Awad Alpharetta, Georgia



"Now, almost every brand carries a 6 by 60 cigar in their portfolio and if I have the choice I wouldn't smoke anything less than a 60 to 70 ring size cigar."

—Armando Padron, Tampa, Florida

Editors' Response: All the prices you see printed in our magazine, and in Cigar Insider, our twice-monthly digital newsletter about the cigar industry, are manufacturer's suggested retail prices (MSRP), which are set by the distributor or maker of the cigars. The MSRP does not take into consideration tobacco taxes, which vary considerably from state to state in the U.S. In some states, the taxes can be quite high, while in others (such as Florida and Pennsylvania) they are as low as zero. Also, retailers reserve the right to adjust prices as they see fit—not all retailers have the same operating costs and overhead expenses. To answer your final question, you are most likely to find cigars sold at MSRP in states with no tobacco taxes.



Printed in the U.S.A.

A publication of M. Shanken Communications, Inc. Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10019 212/684-4224 fax: 212/684-5424 e-mail: letters@cigaraficionado.com

VOL. 27 NO. 3

Editor & Publisher	MARVIN R	SHANKEN
LUILUI Œ FUDIISHEI	WARVIN R.	SHANKEN

Executive Editor DAVID SAVONA Managing Editor **GREGORY MOTTOLA** Senior Features Editor JACK BETTRIDGE Art Director JOHN THOMPSON Associate Editor ANDREW NAGY Assistant Editor

DAVID CLOUGH Editorial Assistant/Tasting Coordinator THOMAS PAPPALARDO

> Senior Contributing Editor **GORDON MOTT**

Contributing Editors PAUL A. EISENSTEIN, MARSHALL FINE, LAURIE KAHLE, MICHAEL KAPLAN, LARRY OLMSTED, JEFF WILLIAMS

Photo Editor CASEY OTO Associate Art Director TODD MILLER Associate Art Director LISA AURIGEMMA Designer **HENRY ENG** Designer DIANA WITKOWSKI **Promotions Designer** LISA GEORGE Assistant Photo Editor KARISSA MAGGIO

Manager, Cigar Aficionado Online ANDREW NAGY Production Associate, New Media Director of Digital Media Site Developer

EDISON A. LEON JAMES LAPORTE ANURADHA UDYAVER

CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY

Senior Vice President, Ad Sales and Services Vice President/Associate Publisher Corporate Advertising Director, Beverage/Alcohol Advertising Senior Account Manager, New Business Integrated Marketing Director

BARRY ABRAMS MIRIAM MORGENSTERN MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK **GEOFF MADDEN** KRISTIN JOHNSON LINDSEY B. RONALD, CHERYL LEWIS

CHRISTINE ANDERSON

Senior Account Directors, West Coast Account Manager, West Coast Southeast Advertising Sales Detroit Advertising Sales

PAULA COCHRANE WHEELER MORRISON, GREEN LEAVES MEDIA

Arizona Golf Advertising Sales Advertising Events Manager Sales Assistants

STEVE BLIMAN JENNIFER ARCELLA JENNY JAIKARAN, MAGGIE KOTRABA

Vice President, Custom Media Advertising Services Manager New Media Coordinator

DON GATTERDAM CHRISTINA CHIAFFITELLA HILARY CHALSON

Director of Technology Lead Developer **Imaging**

MICHAEL TURRO RICHARD OWENS

SAMANTHA SAFFER, ELI HALPERN Prepress DAVE BOULANGER, ERIC CHEUNG

Senior Vice President, Events Senior Events Director **Events Director** Senior Events Manager **Events Manager**

LIZ MOTT SUSANNAH NOLAN LISA GRIBBIN SHAUNTAY DUNBAR

LYNN RITTENBAND

Senior Vice President, Marketing and Circulation Senior Circulation Director Assistant Circulation Manager Senior Retail Sales Director JEANNE HOLLY

LAURA ZANDI PHYLICIA BEDOYA TINA RATWANI Retail Account Manager SHIREN FELICIEN

Chairman Vice Chairman Senior Advisor to the Chairman Senior Vice President Senior Vice President Senior Vice President Chief Financial Officer Vice President, Business Development

Vice President, Production

Assistant to the Chairman

MARVIN R. SHANKEN MICHAEL D. MOABA MEL MANNION CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY LYNN RITTENBAND LAURA ZANDI STEVEN GORDON JESSICA SHANKEN KEVIN MULLIGAN SHEENA DELLANZO

Questions about your subscription? Call 800/365-4929 Questions about your retail sales account? Call 800/344-0763 Dear Marvin,

I have enjoyed your magazine for many years and applaud the listing of the strengths of cigars in your reviews. But in your Top Cigars of 2018, you do not list their relative strengths. How come? If it is helpful in the other reviews, why not here?

Additionally, in the Top 25, are you limited to only one entry from each manufacturer? I would be willing to bet there are at least two to three cigars from the Padrón brand for example, that are worthy of being in your Top 25. Also, is it possible to—when appropriate—list the wrapper type in your reviews? Many of the smokes have both a natural and a maduro version.

John Hoyt La Mesa, California

Editors' Response: In determining Top 25, rather than showing multiple cigars from one brand, we choose the top-scoring cigar for candidacy. This is for two reasons: Firstly, it avoids redundancy. But secondly, it allows for the strongest, highest-rated contender to enter the Top 25 tournament. We are focused on pitting the best of the best against each other in order to truly determine which cigars are deserving of holding a spot on that list.

As per wrapper type, if no distinction is listed than that means that the cigar being tested was made with the company's "natural" wrapper. If the cigar has a maduro wrapper, we say maduro.

And lastly, regarding the strength levels of our Top 25 selections, you are correct. They are not specifically called out. This is something we can perhaps add in the future to improve our list.

Dear Marvin,

I struggle every winter with keeping my humidor to the correct humidity. I own one humidor that can hold up to 50 cigars. I find myself using almost four Boveda packs at 72 percent, along with the sponge that came with the humidor. Yet I still can't break 65 percent humidity.

Douglas Thomas

Granite Springs, New York

Editors' Response: In the winter where you live, it becomes more difficult to maintain proper humidity levels in the humidor due to the dry, cold conditions. Also, not all humidors are created equally. A mediocre to poor humidor might be able to maintain humidity in warmer months, but will show its flaws in the winter when you need it the most. So, the quality of your humidor might be something for you to consider as well. That being said, an extra Boveda pack or two in dryer, colder conditions is an acceptable solution until spring. If this still doesn't work, we suggest buying a better humidor. �



WE'D RAISE A GLASS OF OUR HERITAGE BARREL TO WHISKY ADVOCATE, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY.

Over the years, the Jack Daniel Distillery has received an acknowledgment or two for the work we do. From satisfied sips at the bar to a few World's Fair gold medals, people do occasionally feel the need to get complimentary. And while we don't like to brag about these kind mentions,



we are proud of them. Not quite as proud as we are of the Tennessee Whiskey we make, but proud nonetheless.

It is nice to know that there are folks out there who enjoy what we do. We've been doing it every day, the best we can, for more than a century and a half, and knowing that it's well-received means the world.

So we'd like to give a little appreciation of our own to Whisky Advocate magazine. They named our Single Barrel Heritage Barrel the third best whiskey of 2018, and for that we're grateful. We'd

raise a glass of it to them, but we don't actually have any Single Barrel Heritage Barrel left. It seems that the people at Whisky Advocate weren't the only ones who liked it. But maybe we'll make another barrel or two of it somewhere down the line. We do have a habit of making a little bit of whiskey over here in Lynchburg, Tennessee.





















Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.



style 24 A GROUNDING IN SHOES

electronics 27 HASSELBLAD X1D

time 30 PERIPHERAL ROTOR AUTOMATICS

wheels 33 2019 DODGE RAM 1500

sport 34 Galvin Green Golf Rain Jacket

drink 37 NEW ORLEANS COCKTAILS

collecting 38 THE CRAFT OF GLOBES



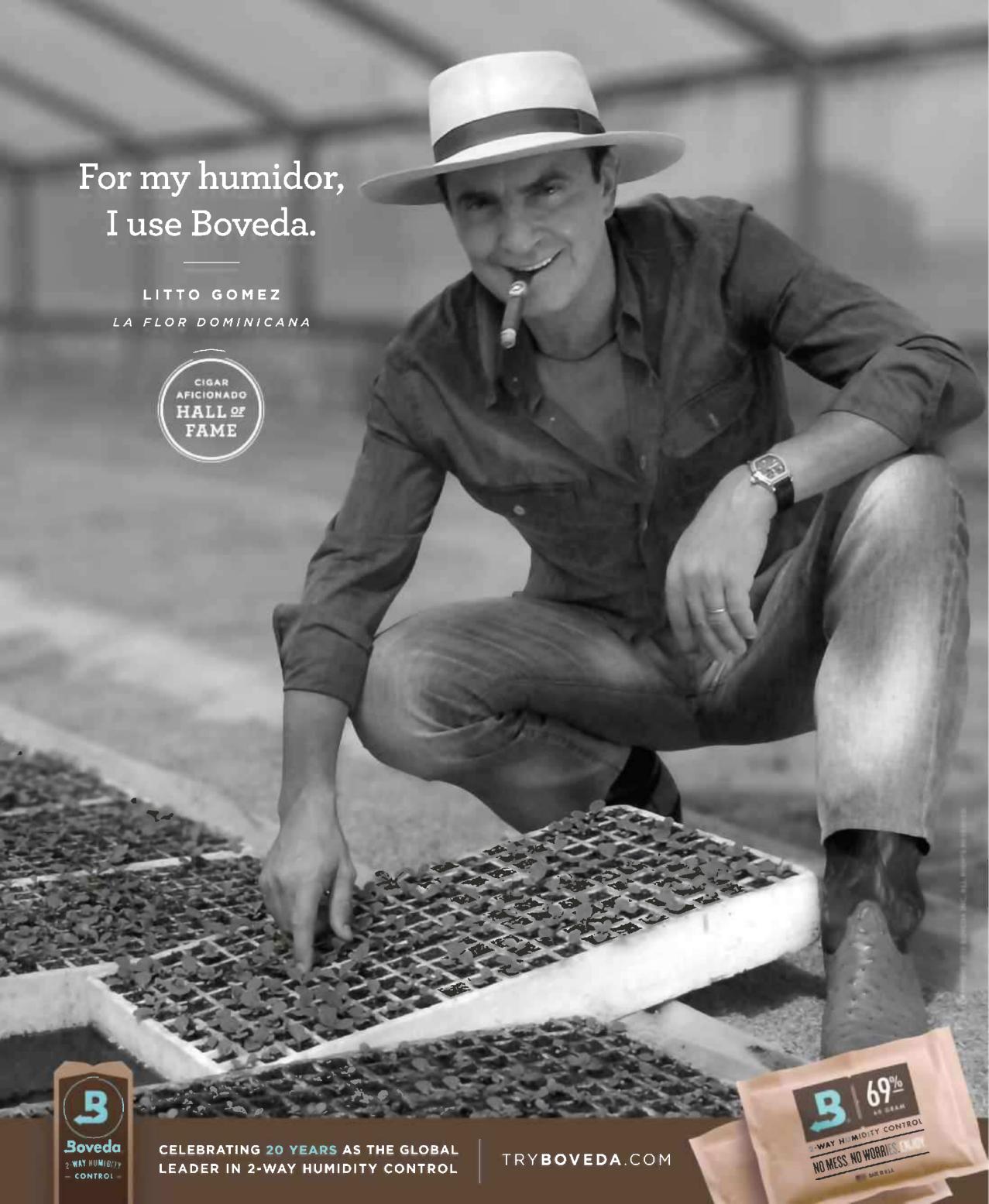














Peter James Leather Cases

I ike many good ideas, the Peter James cigar holder came from frustration. While smoking cigars among a group of friends, Matthew Henderson and John Laurendi noticed the clunky way cigar accessories were transported to the smoking spot. "People were pulling accessories out of every pocket," says Henderson. "I was personally using an old shaving bag to carry my three-finger cigar case, lighter and cutter." For John, it was even worse—he relied upon his wife to carry his cigars and gear—in her purse. She was growing annoyed. "We thought there has to be a better way," says Henderson.

By 2014 the two founded Peter James (using their middle names as inspiration) and they had a product on the market by 2015. The result is the Peter James cigar case, which is far larger than a traditional cigar case, and meant to have all the necessary tools to enjoy a good smoke in one very good-looking device.

The cases have a cigar holder capable of holding five full-sized smokes, two pockets with leather closures for your cutter and

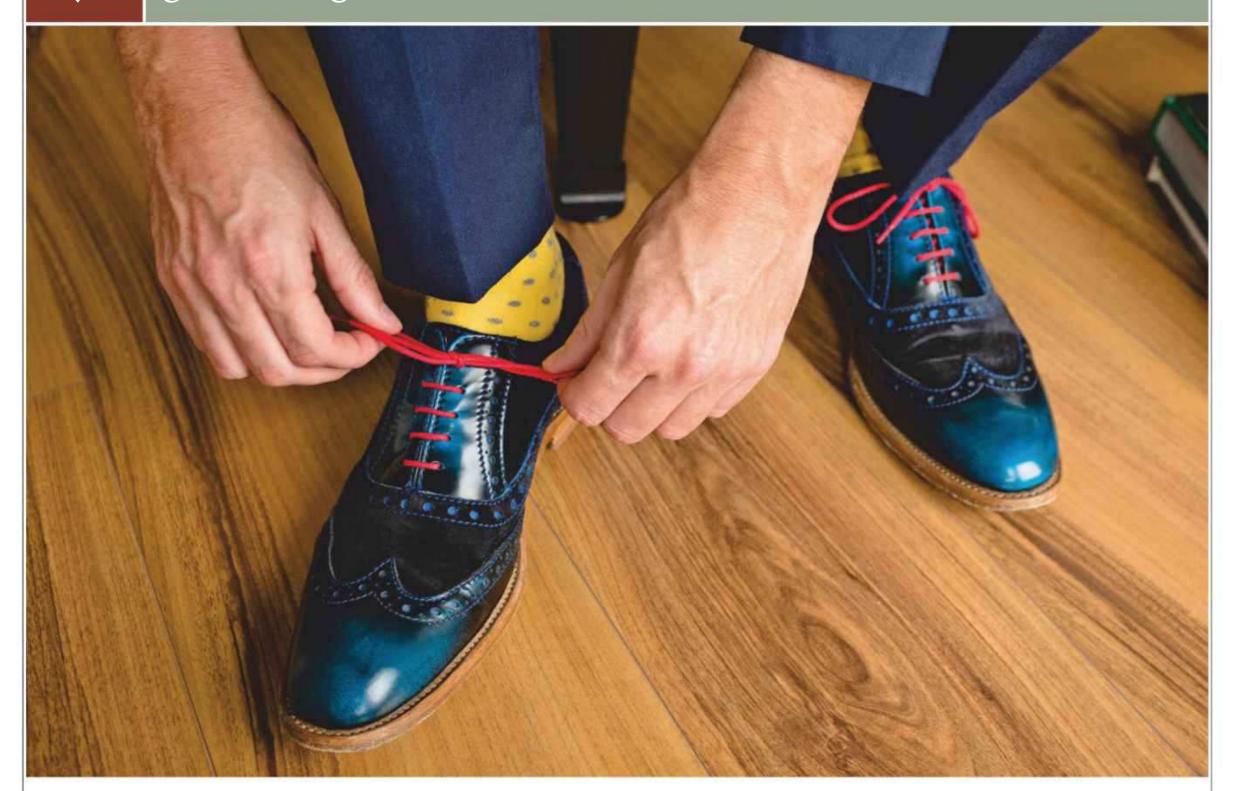
lighter, and a much larger pocket for notecards or other gear. The center has a spot for your pen, and the lid has an opening for documents. A sturdy zipper keeps it closed.

The case is 9½ inches tall (a bit taller than a Kindle), two inches deep and 5½ inches wide. Made in North America using Italian leather and an American **zipper**, it's just flexible enough to allow for easy storage in a briefcase, but sturdy enough to protect your cigars.

And it has style. The case draws a look when you take it out, and keeps your pockets free—and keeps you from having to ask your wife to open her pocketbook to get your Cohibas. At \$350, it is available in several styles.

Visit peter-james-leather-company.myshopify.com

—David Savona



A Grounding In Shoes

ike or lump the look, when of-the-moment menswear designers dictated that dress trousers would be cuffless and hemmed to almost clam-digger levels, they were also elevating the importance of shoes. Since your feet would be on parade, so to speak, it behooved you to put a lot more thought into how they were shod.

The wingtips pictured here are among the most expressive of men's shoes (unless you consider sneakers). Named for the wings that flow from their narrow toecaps, they are also sometimes called brogues, a term that also describes the decorative perforations in the leather. Less flamboyant versions have a rounded toecap and restrained brogueing. When made with the tips in contrasting color to the base leather, they are called spectator, or co-respondent, shoes. A bit over-the-top, they might be something to avoid, especially since the alternate term refers to a dandified professional adulterer.

While a lot of terms are thrown around to define shoes, one principal distinction concerns the closure, or lacing. The monk shoe, so popular now (see CIGAR AFICIONADO June 2016), is easily

identified by its strap closure and lack of lacing. A blucher, or derby, is a laced shoe with the closure sewn to the body of the shoe. An Oxford includes the lacing closure as part of the body (which is shown here, but may be confusing as wingtips are often called Oxfords regardless of the type of closure). The monk strap is the most casual and is usually preferred for daytime wear. The Oxford is considered more formal than the blucher, but it's a detail that most fashion police will fail to cite in subdued light.

Probably more important in terms of propriety has been color. The rule used to be that men wore brown shoes in daylight and black shoes at night. While black has long been appropriate in the A.M., brown will probably always be verboten with black-tie. However, several not-so-grounded hues have broken into the stylish color spectrum, confusing the issue. Yellows, oranges and reds are probably worn best in the day. As the name would suggest, midnight blue is especially dapper at night. Those who wear lavender shoes have probably ditched the rulebook altogether, and now all they have to worry about is coordinating socks and laces.

-Jack Bettridge





Simply The Best.











Churchill 7 x52



Antwersario 1965

www.madalaco.com





Hasselblad X1D

If you've been shooting pix with a cellphone so long you've forgotten what it was like to hold a serious film camera, the first thing you'll notice is the satisfying feel of the Hasselblad X1D-50C. It's not the weight (just 1.6 pounds), nor the size (5.9 x 3.85 x 2.79 inches). But it is the feel of milled aluminum that comes with hefting this first-of-its-kind, medium-format, mirrorless digital camera. The reassuring click of the shutter, the solid action of the mode dials, everything about this handheld evokes the legend of Hasselblad, the brand that has been mounted to military aircraft and made the first trip to the Moon 50 years ago.

Next, you'll appreciate the large CMOS image sensor (50 megapixel), which delivers acute photos with accurate colors from a package about the size of a typical SLR camera. Then there's the breadth of options (shutter speeds range from 1/2000th of a second to 60 minutes). When it's time to print your images, you'll feel confident enough to enlarge to 8 x 10 inches (and far bigger) without sacrificing picture quality.

Based on its lofty caliber and price (\$9,000, extra lenses range from \$2,700 to \$4,500), this Hasselblad gets compared often to performance cars like Ferraris and McLarens, meaning it's a luxury purchase, indefensible as an everyday drive. But a more apt comparison would be to a Rolls Royce. It's built for comfort and not for speed. You'll find yourself taking the time to compose portraits and landscape shots. In fact, its slow reset action suffers while shooting sports and other action shots. (A planned addition of a zoom to its suite of lenses is not yet available.)

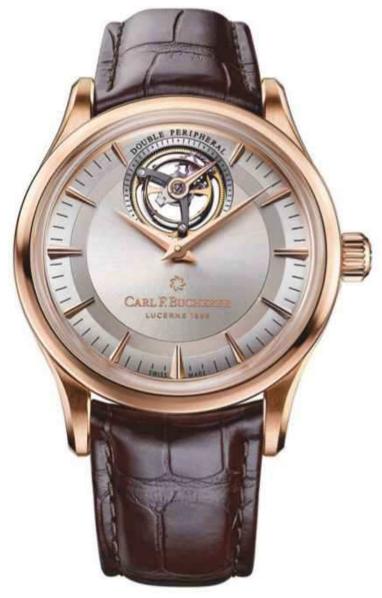
One thing that Hasselblad wisely cribbed from the modern cell phone is the ability to navigate a menu that sits on the back of the camera with finger swipes. It also includes an onboard GPS. There the comparisons end. The X1D won't help you to insert house-of-mirror images on your face for Instagram. Then again you don't buy this camera to take selfies.

Visit hasselblad.com

-Jack Bettridge









Peripheral Rotor Automatics

he trade-off of the first automatic, or self-winding, watches was their chunky central winding rotors blocked your view of all those captivating gears, wheels and bridges. Carl F. Bucherer changed that in 2008, with the groundbreaking CFB A1000 movement that generates energy with an oscillator that turns around the periphery on a system of DLC-coated rollers with ceramic

ball bearings.

There'd been similar systems, but Bucherer was the first to produce an entire collection powered this way. The watchmaker followed up with the next-generation calibre CFB A2000, in 2016, and last year's calibre CFB T3000 with a peripherally mounted tourbillon regulator.

A peripheral rotor also offers slimness as eliminating the central oscillating rotor and moving the winding system to the outer edges of the movement condenses the architecture to shave off precious millimeters. Last year, when Vacheron announced its first automatic tourbillon movement, the ultrathin Caliber 2160 with a 22K-gold, arc-shaped peripheral winding rotor, it became one of the thinnest automatic tourbillon movements on the market at 5.65 mm thick.

Following its debut in dressy gold and platinum pieces, the 2160 made its way into the band's sporty steel Overseas range this year. With its radiant blue-lacquered sunburst satin-finished dial, the 42.5-mm Overseas Tourbillon (\$103,000) mesmerizes with its tourbillon spinning at 6 O'CLOCK, and you can turn the watch over to see its intricate mechanism.

Carl F. Bucherer further elevated the game with the 43-mm, rose-gold Manero Tourbillon Double Peripheral (\$68,000) and the Heritage Tourbillon Double Peripheral Limited Edition (\$88,888), both launched last year to mark the

company's 130th anniversary. Bucherer spent four years developing the CFB T3000 movement that combines the brand's peripheral winding system with a peripherally mounted tourbillon that dispenses with the typical bridges to appear as if it is freely floating in the cage at the top of the dial. The COSC-certified chronometer features a silicon escapement, a first for the brand, and 65 hours of power reserve.

For something much less complicated and far more affordable, Bucherer also upsized its classic Manero Peripheral (\$6,800 to \$16,600) to 43 mm in stainless steel and 18K rose gold with your choice of black or white dials.

Visit carl-f-bucherer.com and vacheron-constantin.com

—Laurie Kahle





THE NEW

Soveda.

NICARAGUAN LOVESTORY



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale. Follow the love story at: www.romeoyjulietacigars.com

@romeoyjulieta_usa

We invite you to discover and enjoy our combined artistic expression, DUETO.



#CuriosityDrivesDiscovery

BALMORALCIGARS.COM O f y





2019 Dodge Ram 1500

As the new 2019 Ram 1500 scrambles up the pass towards the Continental Divide, clambering over boulders and fallen trees, and splashing through rain-filled ruts almost as though it were on a freshly paved roadway, we credit its new "mild" hybrid eTorque system. The technology somehow manages to simultaneously power the Ram's new, semi-active suspension while boosting performance and improving fuel economy. But it's not just traditional performance touchstones that will woo a whole new class of customer to this completely redesigned pickup.

Customers who usually invest in luxury sedans or coupes will enjoy the same level of plush interior choices in the latest Ram 1500 Limited. Like key competitors Chevrolet, Ford and GMC, the Fiat Chrysler truck brand offers a seemingly endless variety of cab, bed and powertrain configurations. But the options on the Limited explore new territory for the company. The power-operated leather seats are heated and vented. Wood trim cherries out the cabin. A 12-inch, portrait-oriented touchscreen displays a wealth of

infotainment software. Outfitted for tech, it offers USB ports galore, a 19-speaker Harman Kardon audio system, even built-in WiFi. Ram also integrates such advanced drive assistance systems as radar-operated cruise control, forward-collision warning with emergency auto braking and lane departure warning. And for those struggling to squeeze into a tight spot, an auto-parking system. Once you check all the boxes, the price tag can easily approach \$70,000.

Of course, if you check the right boxes you'll also get the power to haul a bed full of rocks to decorate the vacation home, or tow a boat and trailer weighing more than 11,000 pounds—trucker stuff that also can prove useful to a suburban homeowner. And the workhorse-cum-luxury-ride formula seems to be working with Ford pushing the limits into the \$100,000 realm, and GMC and Chevrolet right on its tailgate. The race is on. Look for automakers to pack on even more luxury features in the near future.

Visit ramtrucks.com

-Paul A. Eisenstein



Dewars. OUBLE AGE FOR EXTRASMOOTHNESS



WE AGE





WE AGE AGAIN



















DANIEL KRIEGER

Vieux Carré

Bénédictine

2 dashes Peychaud's bitters

2 dashes Angostura bitters

1 oz. rye whiskey

1 oz. Cognac

1 oz. sweet vermouth

Lemon twist as garnish

Rinse an Old-Fashioned glass with Bénédictine. Drop in bitters and a large ice cube. Pour in rye, Cognac and vermouth and stir. Add garnish.

Arnaud's Special

Invented at Arnaud's French 75 bar in the city's Bywater section a few years after World War II, the Arnaud's Special celebrated Scotch whisky with a French twist on the classic Rob Roy (Scotch and vermouth).

2 oz. peat-forward blended Scotch1 oz. (or to taste) Dubonnet2 dashes orange bittersOrange twist garnish

Pour whisky, aperitif and bitters into a mixing glass over ice. Stir briskly. Serve in cocktail glass with garnish.

Hurricane

NOLO is also known for touristy quaffs that go down easy. This is the best (when not too sweet). The legend is that it was invented to deal with a flood of rum after Prohibition ended. Some drink it in a hurricane lamp glass, but that's just silly.

2 oz. light rum
2 oz. dark rum
1 oz. fresh lemon juice
1 oz. orange juice
½ oz. passion fruit syrup
1 dash grenadine
Simple syrup
Lemon wedge
Cherry

Over ice in a Collins glass, pour rums, juices and passion fruit syrup. Add grenadine to color and mix in simple syrup as needed to sweeten. Stir and garnish.



New Orleans Cocktails

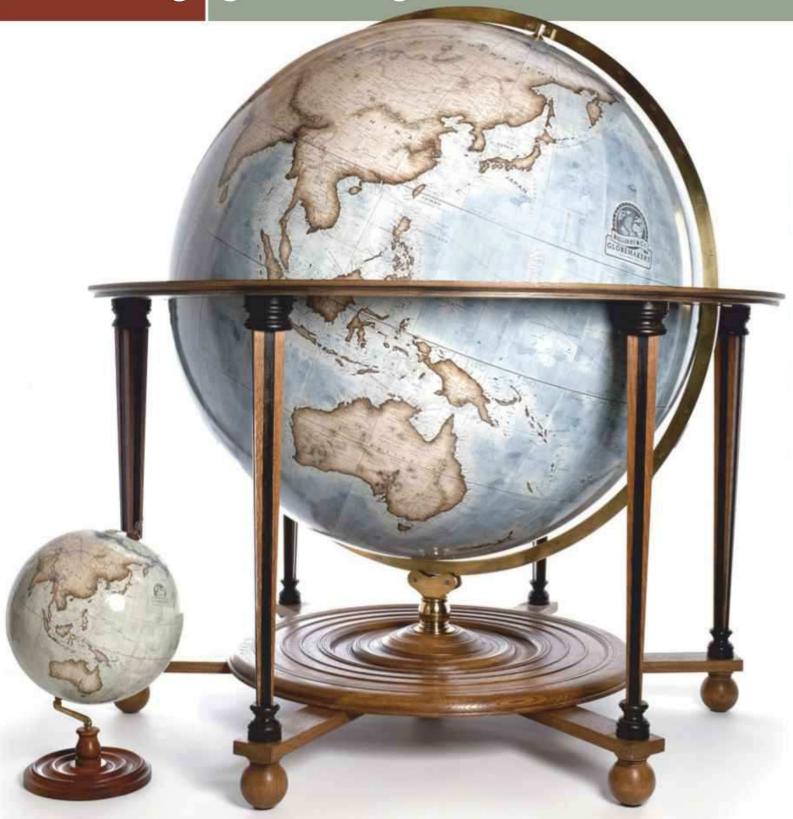
n my first trip to New Orleans as a college swell at Mardi Gras, I cut out at dawn on Ash Wednesday, believing that the party ended with the beginning of Lent. Two weeks later, another classmate returned from a visit and reported the revelry was still in full swing. The point is a party like that is hard to stop, so if you missed Fat Tuesday a New Orleans cocktail may still be in order.

New Orleans is a cradle of mixology,

having given birth to dozens of drinks, including such classics as the Sazerac (one of the first true cocktails), the Brandy Crusta and Ramos Gin Fizz. A later entry on the list is the Vieux Carré, which arrived in the 1930s, with a French name that means Old Square (the French Quarter), at the Hotel Monteleone. Because one wasn't enough, this drink includes two bitters in an already complex mix.

-Jack Bettridge

collecting good life guide







New Global Order

lobes captured Peter Bellerby's fancy early on. "We grow up with globes, we see one and ask our parents where we're from. They show us. We see this massive expanse and you're just this tiny dot. It helps you dream of things."

The experience planted a seed. When Bellerby searched for a globe for his father's 80th birthday, in 2008, he wanted something sublime. Though he looked far and wide, all he found were antique celestial and terrestrial globes. And Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion Map—essentially a world map projected onto the surface of an icosahedron. None "came up to par," he despaired. "I think the reason for this is that [globe making] is impossibly difficult."

And why? "A perfect sphere requires perfect molds made through trial and error. I ended up making a map from scratch, getting the sizing of the gores [slices of the map on a sphere] correct for each size globe. Then learning to wet and stretch paper across a sphere without the paper ripping, tearing, or turning into mush." Bellerby adds that a new globe maker must try to make a globe every day for six months before they get it right.

Using studio space in Stoke Newington, London, Bellerby & Co's 23 employees, working without music or chatter, are monkish in their devotion to detail. They'll make 700 globes this year. A commercial globe online costs \$50. The costs at Bellerby & Co run from £1,200 to £79,000 (about \$1,600 to \$105,121) if you want a five-foot Churchill Globe with a stand. "There's no harm in commercial globes for kids to learn from," Bellerby explains. "We are measuring craftsmanship, the time and effort it takes to make something by hand, the aesthetic, too. If you see our globes I hope you would be wowed by them every time. If you see another globe you might just look at it and find the country where you live."

Bellerby has been commissioned by the Louvre in Paris to restore a globe nearly four feet in diameter once belonging to Louis XIV. The ongoing project has no set delivery date, but then again, maybe it can wait. The globe has been around since 1683.

Visit bellerbyandco.com

-Kenneth Shouler





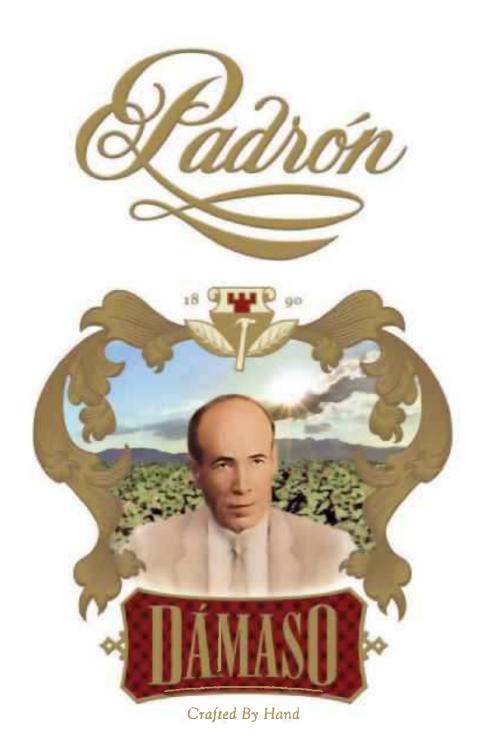
Perfected over 154 years, yours to enjoy now.











For those who seek the quality, complexity and consistency of Padrón.

DÁMASO GAVE US LIFE, FAMILY AND OUR START IN THIS INDUSTRY.

Dámaso was the first Padrón to arrive in Cuba in the late 1800s from the Canary Islands. Commonly referred to as "Isleños", they tended to work in farming and in this tradition our grandfather rented a small piece of land in Pinar del Rio and started

growing tobacco. Honest, decent and hardworking, Dámaso taught us to honor our word and be humble. These are lessons that have stayed with us throughout our lives and we have tried to pass them on to our children. It means a lot to us that we are making this cigar in his honor.

1064 C. Vadion



To create something new, we looked to our past.

The Padrón Dámaso, a mild to medium flavor profile crafted over five generations.

The Dámaso series, our most recent offering, is named for José O. Padrón's grandfather. This round, limited production, hand-crafted Connecticut wrapper cigar is available in six sizes. Its mild to medium flavor profile is complex and characteristically Padrón – best enjoyed in the company of family and friends. The Padrón Family thanks you for your continued loyalty and trust in the Padrón name.

No. 34: 52 x 6 Torpedo | No. 32: 52 x 5 1/4 | No. 17: 54 x 7 | No. 15: 52 x 6 | No. 12: 50 x 5 | No. 8: 46 x 5 1/2

www.padron.com/damaso





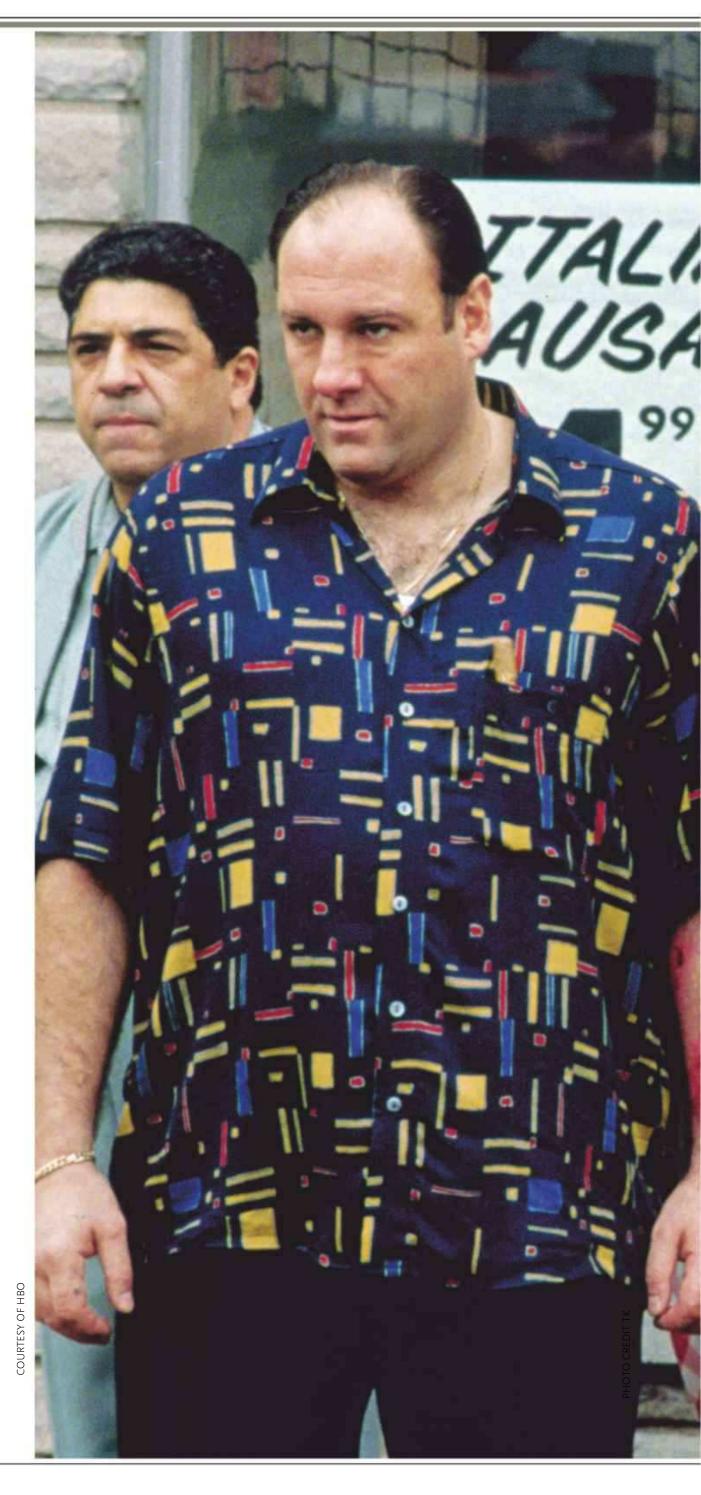
Family MARSHALL FINE

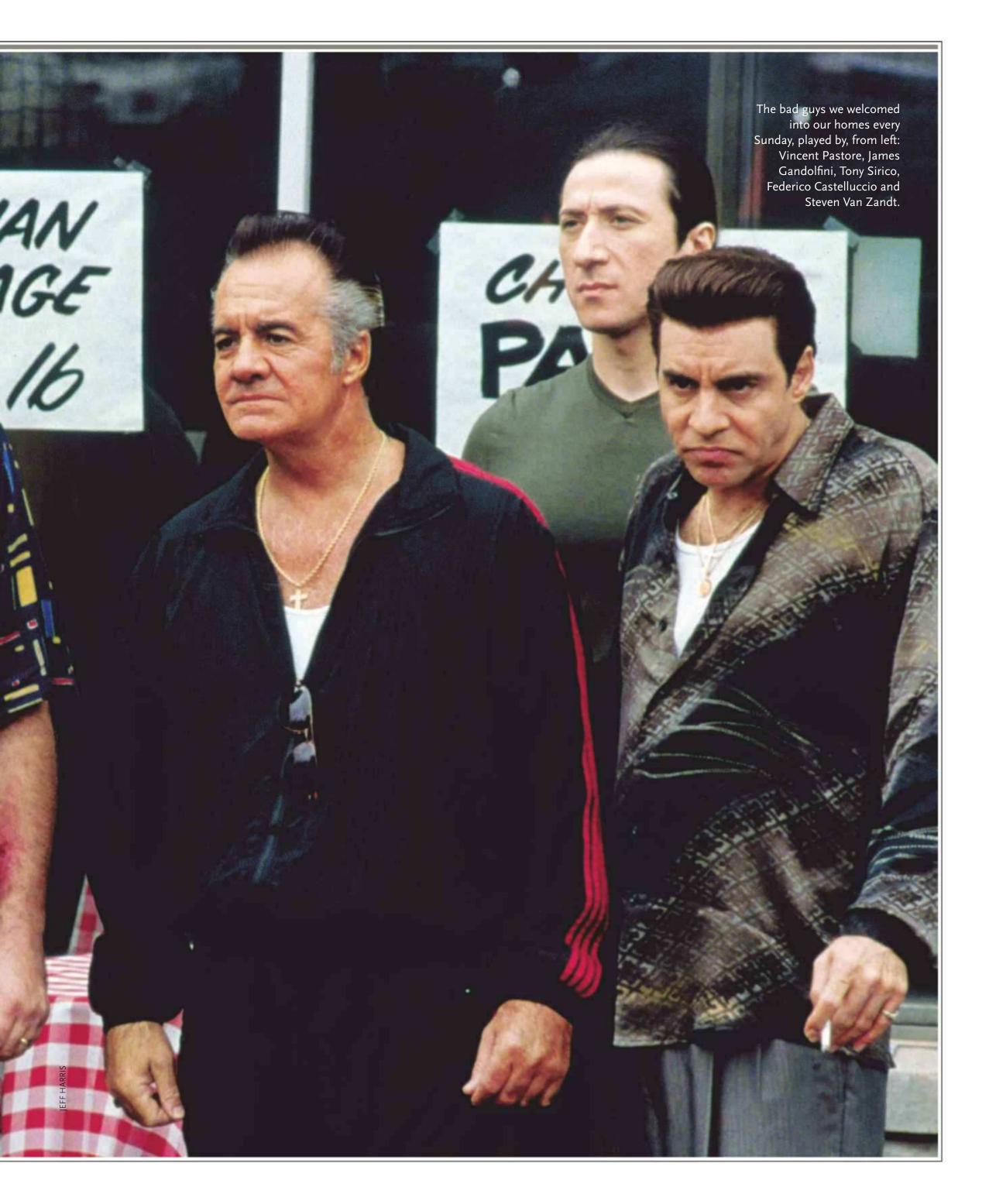
On the 20th anniversary of its debut, "The Sopranos" holds an exalted place in television history. A new film coming next year will continue the story of America's favorite mob family

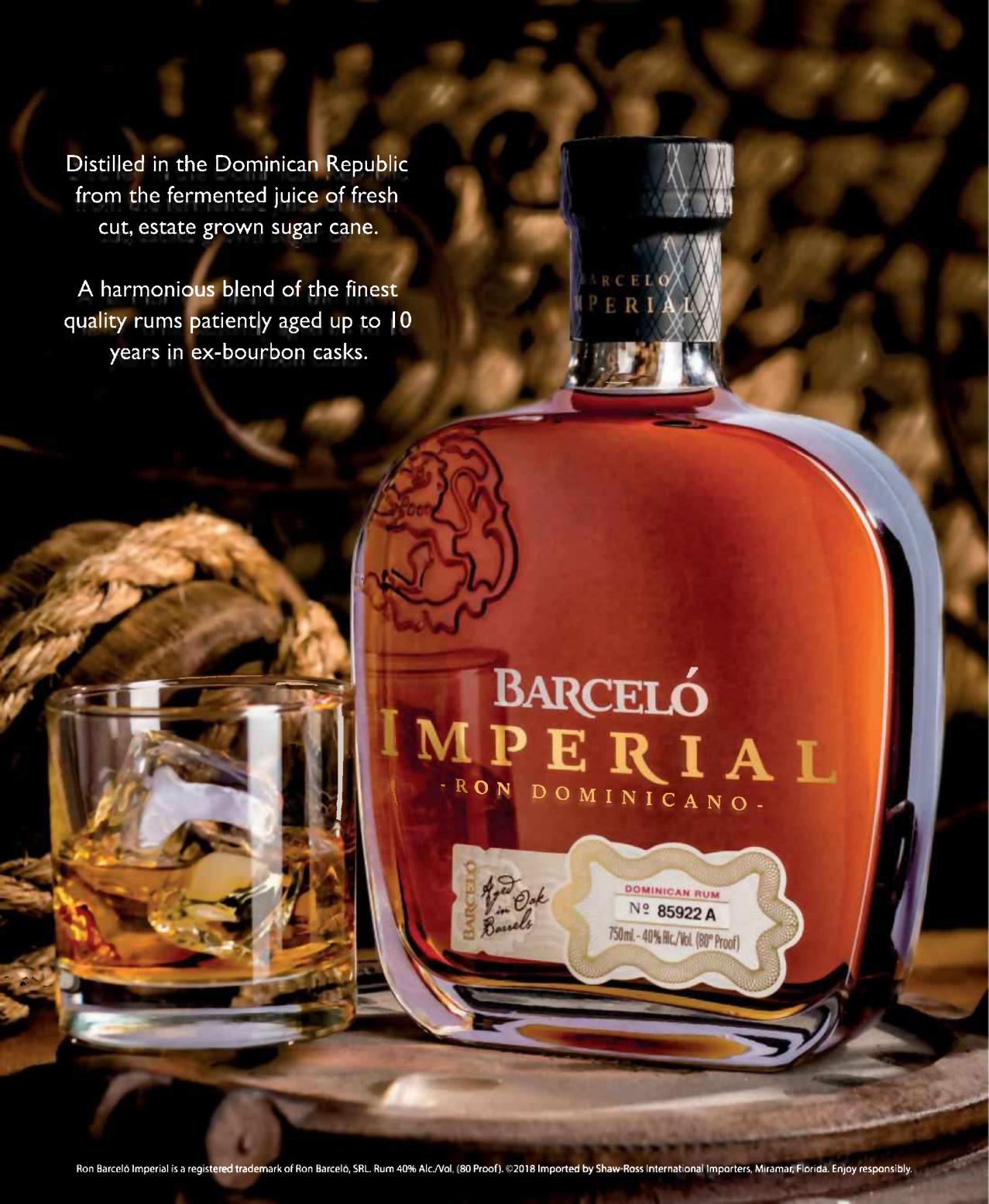
URE, IT'S BEEN TWO DECADES—but it's not like people can just suddenly fuhgeddaboudit. "It's impossible to stop talking about 'The Sopranos,'" says Vincent Curatola, who played mob boss Johnny "Sack" Sacrimoni on the legendary TV show. "It's like trying to stop talking about your life. It was a phenomenon, like an out-of-body experience."

The HBO series came out of nowhere in January 1999, with a cast of actors no one really knew, and set the television world on fire, creating its own niche in television history. A dozen years after it aired its controversial final episode, "The Sopranos" remains one of the most influential and honored shows of all time, setting the table for a new golden age of premium TV that includes everything from "Breaking Bad" and "Mad Men" to "House of Cards" and "Game of Thrones."

Today, the story continues. Series creator David Chase has written *The Many Saints of Newark*, a feature film that will show a young Tony Soprano growing up with his father's generation of mobsters. It made news







in January with the casting of Michael Gandolfini, son of the late James Gandolfini, as the younger version of his father's most famous character, Tony Soprano.

"It's a profound honor to continue my dad's legacy while stepping into the shoes of a young Tony Soprano," Gandolfini said in a statement. "I'm thrilled that I am going to have the opportunity to work with David Chase and the incredible company of talent he has assembled." The film is due to be released next year.

The original series enjoyed both rave reviews and an immense fan following, and it turned its cast into household names—or at least their screen names, which didn't always sit well with the

actors. "It scared me when people started calling me by my character's name. I could never get used to it," says Joe Pantoliano, who played loose-cannon Ralph Cifaretto.

Steve Schirripa, who played the lumbering Bobby "Baccala" Baccalieri, gets called "Bobby" often. When he hears his own name, he says, "I usually stop and think, 'Do I know this guy?'" Before the show, he was entertainment director at Las Vegas' Riviera Hotel, and only dabbled in acting. "My agent told me not to take the part, but I wanted to do this," he says. "It's almost impossible to get any job on TV. That it happened to be the greatest show of all time? It was like winning the lottery twice."

"The Sopranos" turned HBO into a programming powerhouse. "It marked a tipping point that put us on a different

level of the cultural firmament," says Richard Plepler, HBO's longtime CEO and chairman, who announced he was leaving the company on February 28. "It was transformative."

At its peak, "The Sopranos" had an average audience of 18.2 million. Despite only being available to a fraction of television viewers, it was outperforming network shows available to all. The show made history, becoming the first cable entry nominated for an Emmy as best dramatic series, and was nominated for that award each season, winning in 2004 and 2007. The show earned Emmys (amid multiple nominations) for Gandolfini, Edie Falco and other cast members, as well as numerous writing and directing Emmys for Chase and others on his team. When it all went to black on June 10, 2007, television would never be the same.

Getting Made

The man who started it all, David Chase, didn't expect any of this to happen. For starters, he wasn't even planning on making this story into a TV show. His original idea was to make a film about a gangster with an overbearing mother. He wanted Robert

DeNiro to star, and Anne Bancroft in the role of mom. But his agent told him that nobody cared about gangster movies anymore, and suggested making *The Godfather* for television. Chase took his idea to Fox, which turned it down. He then took it to HBO, which said yes.

The kind of language, sex and violence that regularly punctuated episodes of "The Sopranos" would never have flown on network television. Chase, an Italian-American reared in North Caldwell, New Jersey (his father changed the family name from DeCesare before David was born), had written for the networks before, with credits including "The Rockford Files." He was





Michael Gandolfini (right) will play a young Tony Soprano, following in the footsteps of his late father, James.

continually frustrated by the strict rules about what couldn't be shown and said on their airwaves. But on HBO, Chase could blaze a television trail, free of FCC rules.

On January 10, 1999, "The Sopranos" aired for the first time, opening with what became an iconic set of credits. A shadowy Tony Soprano emerges from the Lincoln Tunnel in a large car, a cigar blazing, with the pre-9/11 Manhattan skyline in his rearview mirror, headed for suburban New Jersey. A thumpingly insistent bass drum beat on the soundtrack propelled the rolling bass line that marked his progress from hard-edge city to lush suburb with the growling vocals of the little-known British band A3 singing words that portended something unsettling: "Woke up this morning, got yourself a gun."

"You've got a beautiful retelling of the immigrant experience from arrival to making it big in just two or three generations, within Tony's trip up the turnpike during the opening credits," says Professor Robert J. Thompson, founding director of the Bleier Center for Television & Popular Culture at Syracuse University. "As you watch those credits, you have no idea who this guy is. Except you can see there's as much smoke coming from his cigar as from the industrial wasteland he's driving through. I could talk for a half-hour about the opening credits alone."

Few expected that opening scene to lead to a show that resonated the way it did. "At that time, not a lot of cable series were successful," says Michael Imperioli, who played Christopher Moltisanti, Tony's protégé. "David wasn't a brand name like Steven Bochco. But it impressed me because of the people who started to come on board." One of those was Lorraine Bracco, a one-time Oscar nominee who convinced Chase that she should play Dr.



Jennifer Melfi, Tony's therapist, instead of wife Carmela. "It was the best script I'd seen in 10 years. Since 'Goodfellas'," she says.

One of the early doubters was Chase himself. Before the first season aired, he didn't believe the show would go anywhere. When they finished shooting the final episode—months before the first episode was broadcast—actress Edie Falco, who played Carmela Soprano, approached Chase with a final, "Well I guess that's it for us." "I said, 'Yeah, I think so,'" Chase told the *Los Angeles Times*. "We decided that we'd had too much fun doing it. So probably it would be canceled because they don't want you to have too much fun."

Chase, who initially hoped the pilot would be rejected so he could go back to his idea of turning it into a feature film, found himself instead running the hottest show on television.

The Hottest Show On TV

Dominic Chianese was a working actor who'd made his Broadway debut 35 years earlier. Despite a resumé that included playing the scheming Johnny Ola in *The Godfather Part II*, Chianese had to supplement his acting income with day jobs. "I was like a guy ready to drown that someone threw a life preserver to," Chianese says of being cast as Corrado "Junior" Soprano, Tony's uncle and frequent antagonist.

When the reviews started coming out, things began changing right away. "You could feel the buzz at the next reading,"

Chianese says. "David was shocked." Matt Zoller Seitz, co-author of "The Sopranos Sessions," was TV critic for the *Newark Star-Ledger* when "The Sopranos" went on the air and covered its first three seasons. "I knew this was a landmark show," he says. "It was only a question of whether other people would agree—and they did. A lot of people knew this was something different." Says Imperioli, "The reviews were so overthe-top that 'Saturday Night Live' did a spoof just of the reviews."

Suddenly, here was a show capable of changing America's viewing patterns. "Sunday night became 'Sopranos' night," says Jerry Adler, who played loan shark

Herman "Hesh" Rabkin. "Everything in people's lives seemed to be organized around that one hour of 'The Sopranos,' including mine."

"I knew people who ran restaurants, who told me that, on Sunday nights when 'The Sopranos' was on, the place would empty out," Curatola says. "Very recently someone came up to me and said, 'You guys were the Beatles of TV.'" Everybody seemed to be watching the show, including the FBI and the Mafia: "We had FBI consultants and we'd hear that FBI agents would go in to work and talk about the show on Monday mornings," recalls Terence Winter, who joined as a writer for the second season and became one of the show's producers. "And from FBI wiretaps, we heard that mob guys were having the same conversations. Word got back to us, from an FBI agent, after an episode in which Tony wore shorts, that some mob boss

Sopranos Trivia

Think you know everything about "The Sopranos," there, tough guy? Alright. Let's see if you can answer these 12 questions. The answers are on page 122.

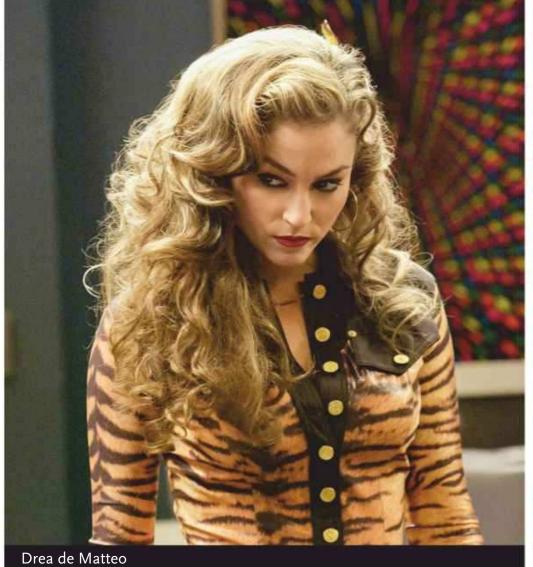
- All of these characters appeared in the first episode. Which ones survived the entire series?
- A Christopher Moltisanti
- B Adriana La Cerva
- Paulie "Walnuts" Gualtieri
- Silvio Dante

- Which of these actors played two completely different characters in the series?
- A Tony Sirico
- **B** Vincent Curatola
- Joe Gannascoli
- Michael Imperioli
- When Tony Soprano becomes boss, what's the name of his organization's crime family?
- A DiMeo
- **B** Soprano
- Bonpensiero
- Dante

4

How many characters were killed over the entire run of the series?

- A 102
- **B** 92
- **G** 82
- **I** 72









- Name the series regular who regularly uncorks an overly enthusiastic retinue of lines from the classic mob movie *The Godfather*.
- A "Feech" La Manna
- **B** Tony Blundetto
- **G** Patsy Parisi
- Silvio Dante

- Which of these actors from the series has a real-life rap sheet?
- A Tony Sirico
- **B** Vincent Curatola
- C John Ventimiglia
- Vincent Pastore
- Which of the following characters did *not* try to kill Tony Soprano?
- ♣ Tony's nephew, Christopher Moltisanti
- Tony's uncle, Corrado "Uncle Junior" Soprano
- Tony's mother, Livia Soprano
- Tony's wife, Carmela Soprano
- In the first episode of the sixth season, what does Uncle Junior say right before he shoots Tony?
- A I knew it was you, Fredo!
- **B** Cazzata Malanga!
- C Vini Vidi Vici!
- On my command, unleash hell!



was taped saying, 'A don doesn't wear shorts. It makes you look weak.' David ended up incorporating that line into the show."

Being on the show was one thing. With a robust death count, staying employed proved to be difficult. The threat of a character getting whacked meant you were being asked to leave the most interesting party you'd ever attended. "It wasn't like being one of the 'Friends.' None of them ever got killed off," says Schirripa, whose character lasted until the series' penultimate episode. "There wasn't really job security because you never knew if your character was going to be killed. Then not only was your character dead, but you were out of work."

With deaths in (nearly) every episode, fans wanted to know who was next to be whacked. The possibility of plot secrets leaking to the media led Chase to take serious precautions. Drea de

Matteo recalls the secrecy when they filmed the final episode for her character, Adriana. "People were paying top dollar to crew members for information," she says. To ward off a leak, they filmed the scene two ways, and in one version, she lives. "But nobody knew which ending he was going to use, including me." In the end, Adriana is driven to the woods and pulled from a car by Tony's right-hand man Silvio Dante, and despite her tearful cries is shot as she tries to crawl away.

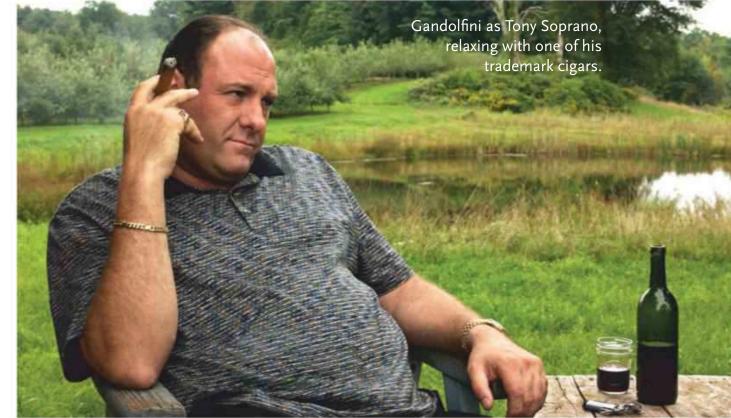
That kind of violence defined "The Sopranos." Pantoliano, whose character died in a savage fight with Tony involving fists, frying pans, knives and even a blast of Raid to the eyes, brushes aside those who complained about the brutality. "It's been going on since Jesse James and Bonnie and Clyde, even Genghis Khan. They don't make movies about Mother Teresa. But this was a show about the deconstruction of the American family."

The term family takes on multiple meanings in the shadowy "Sopranos" world. It also explains its appeal, says author Gay Talese, who wrote Honor Thy Father about gangster Salvatore "Bill" Bonanno, whose situation mirrored Tony's. "That's what made it compelling," says Talese. "No matter how nefarious and murderous and vulgar they were, there was a family side to the story. And so much that was going on in the crime story had to do with the family story."

That element—crime boss as modern suburban dad coping with an unhappy wife and a domineering mother, not to mention teenage kids-gave "The Sopranos" its distinctive tang and

emotional depth. Tony might have been the don of New Jersey, but he was barely king of his own castle.

"Having the second family was genius on David's part," Chianese says. "He went inside himself, took his soul and split it in two." The fulcrum of that balancing act between families was Dr. Melfi, the therapist Tony sees after suffering panic attacks that cause him to pass out. The tension from that therapeutic relationship rippled out in all directions: Carmela's jealousy of a female therapist, Tony's fear his therapy might be discovered by his crime family and Melfi's moral conundrums about treating someone who was also a ruthless killer. Says Talese, a fan from the first episode, "What made it interesting was that a psychiatrist had a role as an adviser and counselor to this guy. And Tony had the vulnerabilities, concerns and anxieties that we all share.



So it was a very human story in a very inhuman world."

"In most movies, the mob boss never gets to discuss his inner feelings," says author Nicholas Pileggi, who wrote the screenplays to Goodfellas and Casino. "At no point does The Godfather explain where he came from. It's all painted around him. David Chase came up with the notion of going to a shrink, and that was the perfect vehicle. It allowed the audience to get into the mind of Tony Soprano in an interesting way."

Soprano was a big guy with big power, and he also indulged in big cigars. So did the character Big Pussy, played for two

What was the original name of Satriale's pork store?

- A Salsiccia Sausage Co.
- **B** Cotoletta's Quality Meats
- Centanni's Meat Market
- Brasciole Bros. **Italian Groceries**

How many actors

and actresses in the famous mob movie Goodfellas went on to appear in "The Sopranos"?

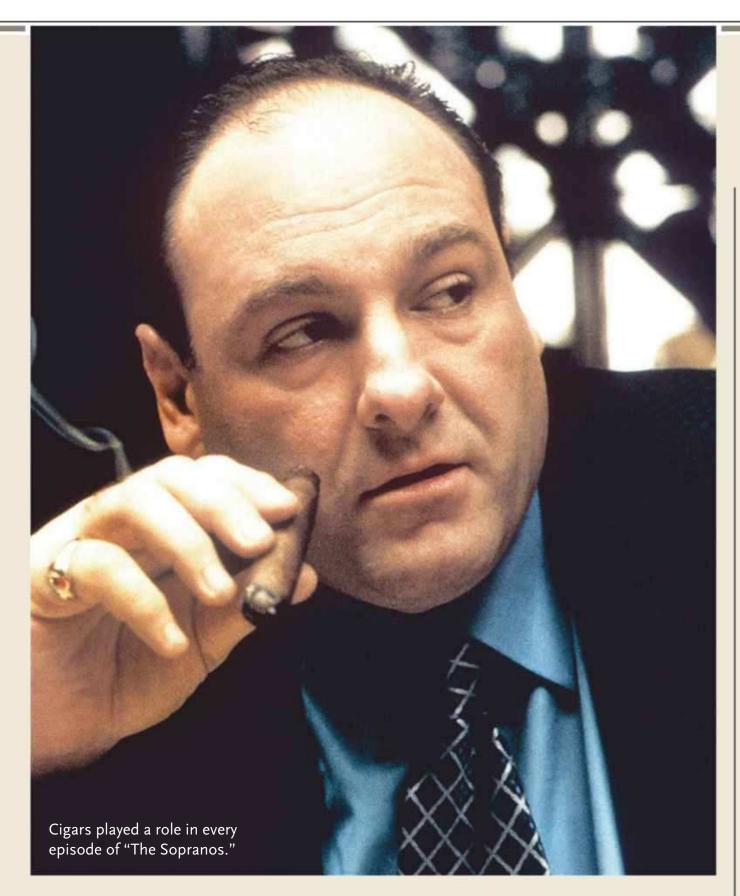
- **A** 7
- **B** 11
- **G** 17
- **I** 27

In which episode of "The Sopranos" did show creator David Chase have a cameo?

- A "Pax Soprana," Season 1
- **"Comendatori." Season 2**
- f "The Telltale Moozadell." Season 3
- "Calling All Cars," Season 4

What song does Tony play on the diner iukebox in the final episode of "The Sopranos"?

- A "Don't Stop Believin'," by Journey
- **B** "It Was a Very Good Year," by Frank Sinatra
- 🕻 "I've Gotta Be Me." by Tony Bennett
- "Eye of the Tiger," by Survivor



Cigars in "The Sopranos"

f there was a cigar-smoking hall of fame for fictional TV characters, who would you induct? Gomez Adams? Colombo? Archie Bunker for sure. Oscar Madison too. All are smoking icons of the broadcast world, but if they qualify, then surely Tony Soprano would have to get the nod.

You remember Tony. He's the antisocial mob boss of New Jersey who's light on self-awareness, prone to panic attacks and has a heavy penchant for cigars. So heavy that cigars are closer to Tony than any character throughout the entire show, even his wife.

Here's a guy who's smoking cigars alone in his car during the opening credits of every episode—that's 86 shows—and it certainly didn't stop there. From moments of solitude to acts of brutality, Tony Soprano often had a lit cigar punctuating his actions or under-

scoring his mood, but the stogie ended up being more than just a clichéd prop. Many of the cigar-smoking scenes were pivotal moments in plot and character development, not to mention grim reminders of Tony's sociopathic tendencies—the ease in which he can oversee countless acts of violence, cheat on his wife, flout the law, lie to loved ones and then come home to join his family for Sunday supper. For many of Tony's misdeeds and much of his pathological behavior, a cigar is lit.

Think we're reading too much into it?
Recall in Season 2 when one of his hit men made a collection on a local "massage parlor." Tony waited outside in his parked car with the window open and gleefully listened for the screams. He puffed a cigar, smiling as proudly as a father watching his daughter at

a piano recital. That's not normal.

Remember his first panic attack in the very first episode? There was a cigar in his mouth right when he collapsed in his backyard. Or how about when he decided to dump his Russian girlfriend Irina right after sex? He was smoking. What about the time he gunned down Matt Bevilaqua? Or was in Italy talking gender roles with the female Neapolitan mob boss? ("A fuckin' woman boss? Never happen in the States," he says.) Or yelling at his wife for draining the swimming pool as they argued precariously on the edge? He even smoked in a funeral home, and blew smoke over a corpse, saying "he don't mind." We could go on and on.

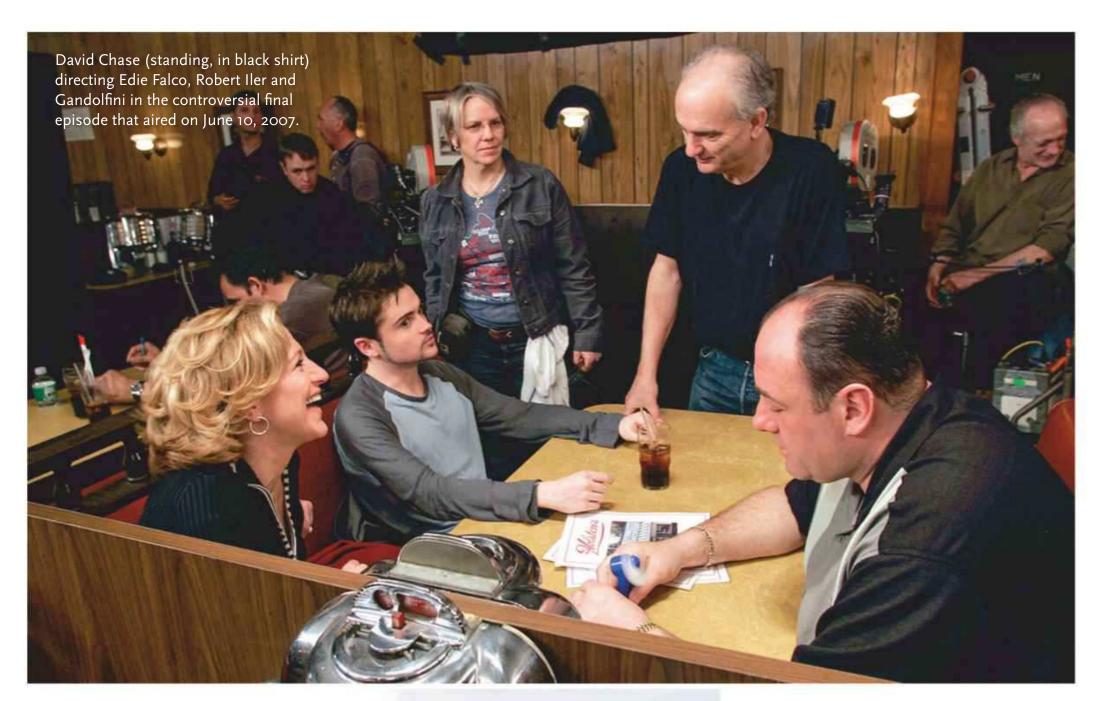
Still, there were a few contemplative moments where Tony lit up. There was the time he was on "bear watch" in his backyard one chilly evening with an AK-47 in one hand and a cigar in the other. And the time he spent a rainy night in the stable with his sick, beloved race horse Pie-O-My and a billy goat, smoking a cigar and sitting in the hay like something out of a deranged nativity scene.

Perhaps one episode in particular illustrates Tony's most pathological need for cigars. It was when his psychiatrist suggested that he craves ceaseless action so that he doesn't have to acknowledge the abhorrent things he's done (referred to as alexithymia in clinical terms). The next time you see Tony, he joins his crew and what does he do for the ultimate distraction? Lights up a cigar as big as the Bayonne Bridge.

Of course, the cigar industry didn't miss a chance to capitalize on Tony's compulsive cigar consumption. Three actors from the series came out with cigars of their own pushing the whole mafia theme, and there was even an officially licensed Sopranos cigar by CAO. It's still around, only now marketed under the name CAO Consigliere and packaged suspiciously like the original.

For all its vaunted praise, The Sopranos has also taken its share of criticism for promoting stereotypes and being needlessly violent, but amidst all the mob hits, exaggerated Jersey accents and gloomy foreshadows, the cigar turned out to be as much of a character in the show as The Garden State itself, and quite the effective literary device. Then again, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. Or, as Tony Soprano might put it: Get the fuck outta here!

—Gregory Mottola



seasons by Vincent Pastore. "Tony and I smoked big stogies in the show," Pastore says. "It's a prop; it's symbolism. When someone is smoking a cigarette, it means they're nervous. But a cigar is a personal thing. It's an extension of the character."

Every cigar seen on screen had a purpose, and none were smoked on camera by accident. "Nothing happened that wasn't scripted. Every action on the screen was vetted by David," says Winter. "Cigars create a powerful image. You see Tony or people in positions of authority or power, and the cigar is part of the image they project. You see somebody smoking a cigar and there's a level of authority that comes with it."

Gandolfini, a large, sensitive man who died from a heart attack at the age of 51 in

2013, struggled with portraying the character's darkest impulses, particularly his acts of impulsive, brutal violence. "It wasn't easy for Jim to go home after playing violent scenes and scenes of cheating on his wife," Bracco says. "Off-camera, he was great fun, a big kid—a big teddy bear. He was charming and sweet and moving."

Aida Turturro, who played Tony's elder sister Janice, had been friends with Gandolfini since working with him onstage in the early 1990s: "Everybody loved Jimmy," she says. "He had the



biggest heart. And he was no diva. The reason that set worked and everyone loved being on the set was because there was no diva bullshit from anyone. Jimmy worked his ass off. He was so generous with everyone. There are a lot of selfish actors out there, but he wasn't one of them."

Gandolfini wasn't the only one who had problems with the words and actions the series required. Chianese recalls balking at some of the language that Junior Soprano used. "The toughest moment was when David wanted me to say the 'F' word in front of Nancy Marchand," Chianese says, referring to the actress who played Tony's difficult mother, Livia. "That was taboo when I was growing up. I didn't even curse as a kid. I was really upset. But it didn't faze

Nancy. Then there was an episode where I had to say the 'C' word. My sister called me and said, 'How dare you?' My aunt, who was 95, shook her head and said, 'You never cursed as a child.'"

To this day, it's easy to start an argument about "The Sopranos": Just mention the series' final episode, one of the most controversial and provocative ever produced for television. In the course of the final hour, Chase seemingly tied up the loose plot strands from the season, ending the war with the New York crime family.





With life back to normal, the nuclear Soprano family was off to their local diner for dinner. But even as they gathered, there were suspicious-looking characters lurking. Were they there to kill Tony?

Perhaps. Or perhaps not. Just as the tension reached its peak, with the Journey song "Don't Stop Believin'" playing on the jukebox, the screen went black. End of series. The implication? That if someone in that diner didn't kill Tony that moment, someone eventually would, because that was the world he inhabited. For the past 13 years, however, Chase has been dogged by what's

essentially a yes/no question: Did Tony die or didn't he?

In "The Sopranos Sessions," Chase, who casually referred to the ending as "a death scene," said Tony "could have been whacked in a diner. That was the point of the scene... I never thought it would create that much of a stir. Never thought, 'Oh, they'll be talking about it for 10 years because I want them to talk about it for 10 years.' But no matter what I say, I dig myself in deeper."

Streaming platforms and binge-watching may affect the ability of new weekly shows to break out as the kind of "appointment televi-

sion" that "The Sopranos" did. But the on-demand availability of the series has made it a new favorite of millennials, a generation too young to watch the series in real time. "I have freshmen in my classes, who were not even alive when the show went on the air, who have watched the entire thing," says Thompson. "I've got kids in their 20s stopping me on the street," says Schirripa.

The Story Continues

With a fanbase that's clearly still eager to hear more of the Soprano story, Chase will return to the mobster world he created for *The Many Saints of Newark*, which is scheduled for a 2020 release. The film will be set in New Jersey between 1967 and 1971,

telling the story about the fathers, uncles and other predecessors to the characters that made up the HBO series.

The main character in the film will be Richard "Dickie" Moltisanti, father to Christopher Moltisanti. (The surname means "many saints" in Italian.) Although he is dead by the time "The Sopranos" series begins, we hear of Dickie Moltisanti several times in the series, as he was Carmela's cousin and a close associate of Tony, who calls Christopher his nephew, even though the two aren't related.

Another key character in the new movie will be young Tony Soprano himself, and the

film began generating preproduction buzz when it was announced that Chase had cast Michael Gandolfini, the son of James Gandolfini, in the role.

With deaths in (nearly) every episode, fans wanted to know who was next to be whacked.



CAMPFIRE SMOKINESS



TOFFEE

NO.4 IN THE GLENFIDDICH EXPERIMENTAL SERIES

Glenfiddich has long pushed boundaries and challenged traditions. Never has this been more evident than with Fire & Cane. It's a bold fusion of campfire smokiness with oak and peaty notes, finished in Latin rum casks to produce a surprising toffee sweetness.



Michael Gandolfini (center) with Robert Iler and Jamie-Lynn Sigler at a New York City gathering commemorating 20 years of "The Sopranos."

He's not quite as tall, and he's far more slim, but there are times when Michael Gandolfini has that look that instantly reminds you of his late father, especially when you see him break into a wide smile. He's only 19, with few acting credits to his name. He played a busboy in the 2018 movie *Ocean's 8*, the same year he had a five-episode run in the HBO series "The Deuce."

Those who knew the show best have faith in the young Gandolfini. Chase gives a verbal shrug when asked about the choice: "It

The Many Saints of

up "The Sopranos."

Newark will tell the story

about the fathers, uncles

and other predecessors to

the characters that made

wasn't a tough decision," he says. "I saw him do it and that was it."

Winter says, "I've known Michael since he was a baby. He's hugely talented, like his dad. But those are big shoes to fill."

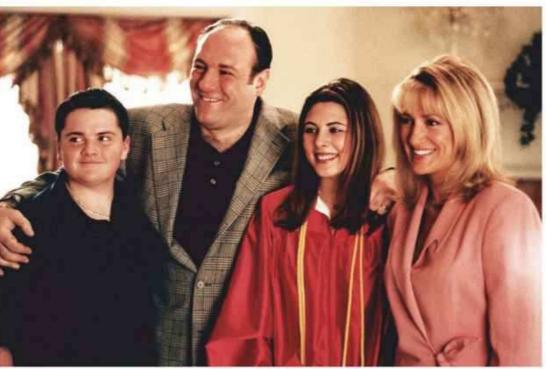
"By having Jimmy's son in the movie," says Turturro, "it's like part of Jimmy and so it's part of the family."

Other cast members for *The Many Saints* include "Walking Dead" alum Jon Bernthal; Corey Stoll, who played a Congressman

with an addiction problem in "House of Cards;" Vera Farmiga (from *The Departed*); Billy Magnussen (*The Big Short*) and Alessandro Nivola in the lead role as Moltisanti.

The prequel is keeping Chase busy for now. And while platforms such as Netflix and Amazon have opened their vaults to lure other show-runners to their unfettered playing fields, Chase says no one has approached him about creating a new series to bring his work back to the small screen, not that he's necessarily interested.

"Once in a while, we get interested in the idea of doing



The Soprano family. From left: A.J. (played by Robert Iler), Tony (James Gandolfini), Meadow (Jamie-Lynn Sigler) and Carmela (Edie Falco).

something there," he says. "But then, whatever the idea is wears itself out after a couple of weeks. I could see how it could be a great thing. But there's so much of it, so much competition, that I don't know how anything can break out anymore."

If Chase does do another TV project, don't expect it to air on a network.

"I can't possibly imagine why anyone would take an adventurous new show to one of the networks," Chase says. "I don't watch them a lot but when I do, it seems to be the same old thing. I can't tell one from the other. So, if it were me, I wouldn't take a show there."

Many of the people behind the cameras and the words for "The Sopranos" have gone on to create other acclaimed projects. Winter wrote and produced "Boardwalk Empire," the HBO series starring "Sopranos" vet Steve Buscemi as a gangster in Atlantic

City during Prohibition. Matthew Weiner, who was a "Sopranos" writer and producer, went on to create "Mad Men," the hit AMC series that starred Jon Hamm and earned plenty of Emmies. Tim Van Patten, who directed 20 episodes of "The Sopranos," more than any other, has done work on the latest HBO hit, "Game of Thrones."

For some, there's just no escaping "The Sopranos." Asked whether, at age 73, he thinks about his legacy and the show,

Chase gives a rueful chuckle and says, "Unfortunately, I do." Pressed on his answer, Chase admits that thinking that way seems self-involved to him.

"Certainly, it will be a great legacy to leave," he says. "But when someone asks you that, you feel like a jerk admitting that you do." •

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is critic-in-residence at The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham, NY.

SCOTTISH SPIRIT MEETS KENTUCKY SOUL



#1 Cigar
Year
Year
2014



OTAN RESERVA LIMITADA

RESERVA LIMITAI





The Oliva Serie V Melanio is hand rolled using expertly fermented ligero fillers, leaves known for their robust and rich flavor. This special cigar is sure to exceed a premium cigar smoker's highest expectations.

Blending Notes: The Serie V Melanio is full flavored yet smooth. The long filler tobaccos are a blend of Oliva Nicaraguan Habano that emphasizes tobacco from the Jalapa region, an area known for a more nuanced leaf than the Esteli or Condega regions. This carefully aged Jalapa blend produces a particularly flavored smoke.

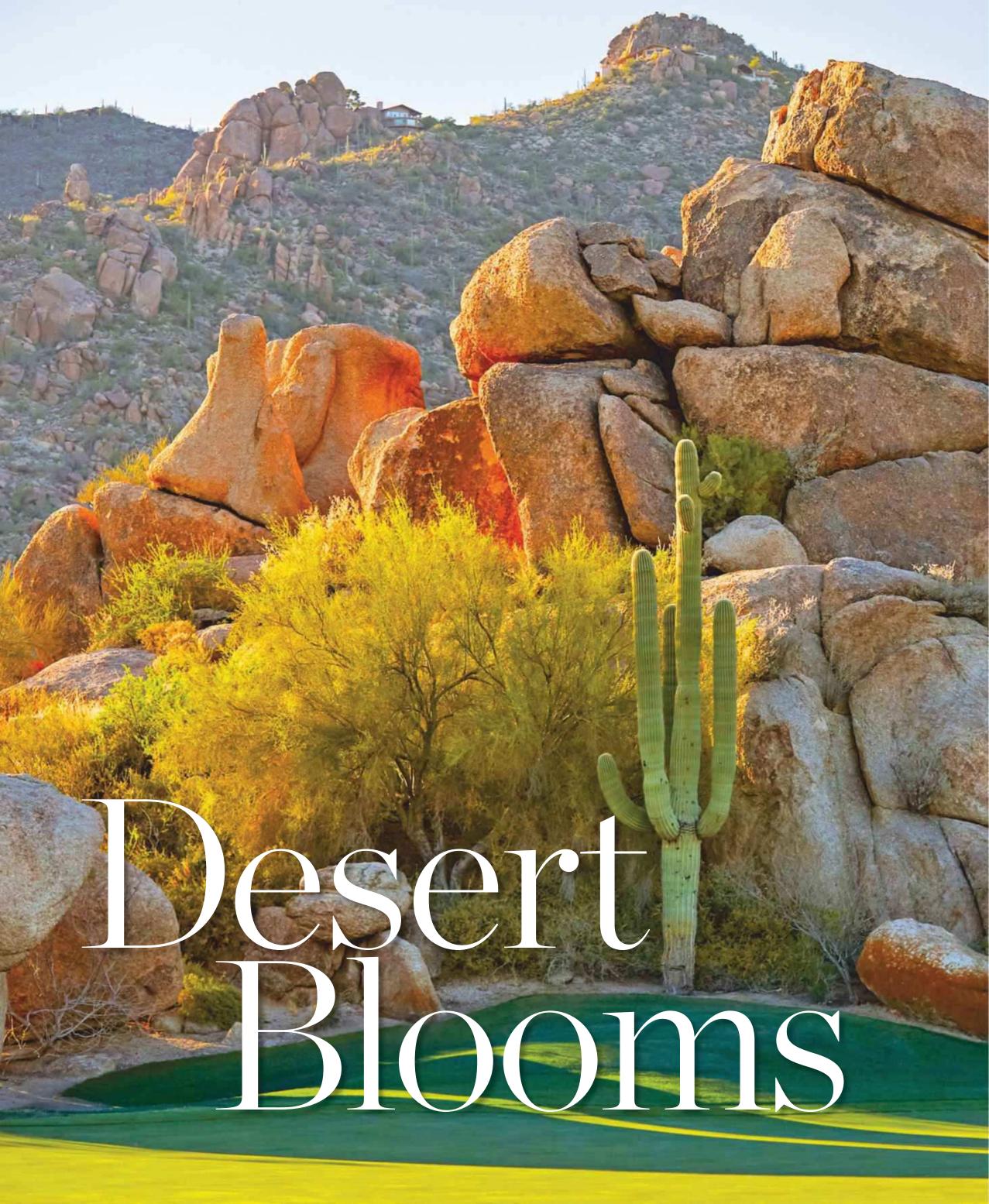
COMPLEX / SMOOTH / BALANCED

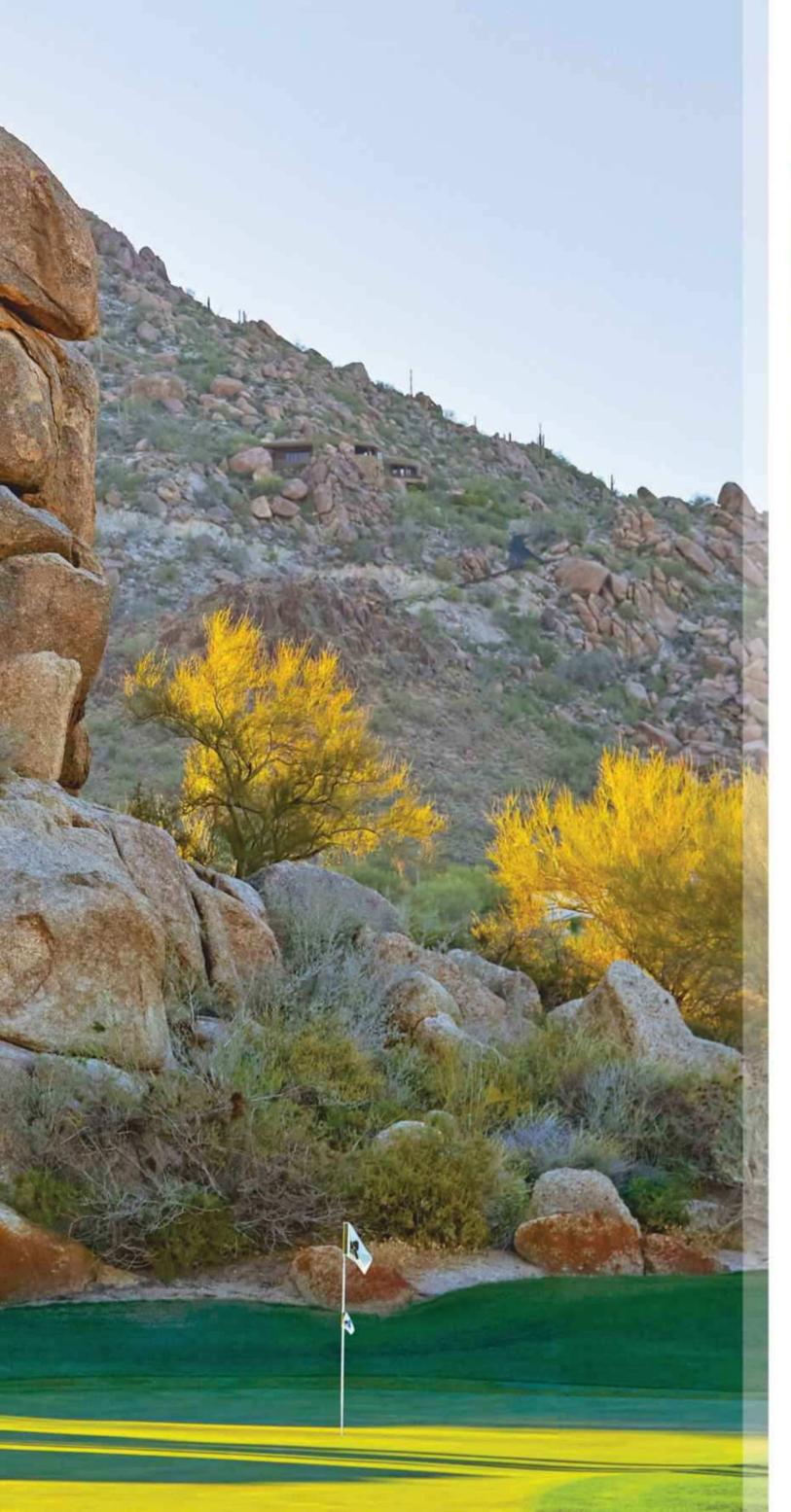
Wrapper: Ecuadorian Binder: Nicaraguan Filler: Nicaraguan

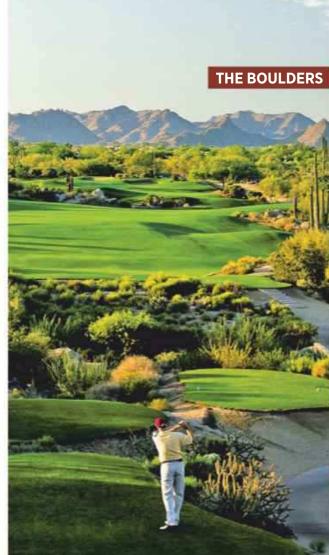












The Scottsdale, Arizona, area is home to some of the world's most stunning golf courses, and a host of luxury resorts perfect for a golf trip

BY LARRY OLMSTED

magine a cactus. There are nearly 2,000 different kinds of catci around the globe, but odds are very good that the one you are picturing is the saguaro, tall and green with curving arms raised towards the sky-the stuff of Road Runner cartoons. It is the quintessential cactus, yet surprisingly it is only found in one ecosystem, the Sonoran Desert, a relatively tiny chunk of the earth's real estate. The Sonoran Desert also happens to be the ideal setting for desert golf, a dramatic landscape that resembles the ocean floor, with a tumultuous, boulder-strewn rocky surface that is never quite flat, filled with fissures in the form of arroyos, and crowned with myriad types of cacti that eerily mirror varieties of coral, such as branch, brain and reef. It is gorgeous and scary at the same time.

Standing guard like a silent sentry, a mature saguaro cactus watches over the first green at The Boulders, one of the many striking golf courses found in Scottsdale, Arizona.





When golf was born in the coastal dunes of Scotland more than 500 years ago, there was just one style of design, links golf. As the game gained popularity it quickly grew inland, and heathland and parkland styles have existed for centuries. But a fourth major design style would not be added until 1962, when accomplished designer Red Lawrence carved out the private Desert Forest Club course in Carefree, just north of Scottsdale, Arizona. He left nearly two-thirds of the course in its innate wasteland state, minimizing grass and following the natural contours, creating a risk and reward strategic gem that has remained ranked in the nation's Top 100 ever since.

Desert Forest created the mold for superior desert golf. Often called target golf, this type of course can require hitting from one patch of green to the next while braving beautiful but harshly penal surroundings. The best desert courses look as if

an artist painted islands of green onto a khaki background, and then crumbled up the canvas to form jagged peaks and valleys. "The appeal of golf in the desert has to do with the sharp contrast of playing surfaces," says Bradley Klein, the longtime former Architecture Editor for *Golfweek* magazine. "The contrast of textures is especially strong when you have lush, soft green courses seemingly helicoptered in to these harsh, forbidding surrounds. There's a lot of plant life on the desert floor, and it's of such strange beauty—saguaro cacti, prickly pear, cholla—that you can't get it out of your mind while you're playing."

The Sonoran Desert has been proven to be the very best setting for desert golf design on the planet, and its epicenter is where the style was born, the greater Scottsdale area, known in golf travel parlance as the "Valley of the Sun." Every top course architect alive has eagerly made the pilgrimage here to lay out fairways and greens in this spectacular setting.

Today, Scottsdale has quality courses and natural beauty in spades, but it also has several other assets that make it one of the world's favorite golf vacation destinations. "Scottsdale is one of the few of the country's major golf destinations where you don't have to make any compromises," says longtime local Tom Lehman, U.S. Open champ and former Ryder Cup captain. "It's easy to reach from anywhere in the country. The weather is great. The courses and resorts are world-class, and you'll never run out of things to do off the course." Because of the great weather, flight access and dense concentration of top-tier courses, many other golf stars live here, including Phil Mickelson, Tom Weiskopf, Cristie Kerr, Kirk Triplett, Hale Irwin, Billy Mayfair and many others. But for visitors coming on vacation,

Scottsdale offers even more: many of the best designs are anchored to five-star luxury resorts. It's also one of the nation's more cigar-friendly golf destinations.

While most come for the region's signature desert golf, you'll find every kind of layout here, even courses with wall-to-wall grass. "Designers have long known that the world's best environment for building desert courses is the Sonoran Desert, and this is its heart and soul," says golf writer Michael Patrick Shiels. Despite the overwhelming number of choices, the city layout makes planning a golf vacation here surprisingly easy. The biggest choice is where to stay, with luxury resorts featuring very different styles and character, and the rest a short drive away. These are the best options for your trip.

Fairmont Scottsdale Princess & TPC Scottsdale

The longest-running AAA Five-Diamond resort in Arizona (27 straight years), the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess is the fullest of the full-service luxury resorts in town. The sprawling 750-room complex has multiple restaurants, bars, pools, one of the largest and most lavish spas in the Southwest and two exceptional golf courses. The lodging highlight is a Fairmont Gold boutique hotel-within-the-hotel, with just 69 superior rooms and private lounge. There is also a casita section of the resort with 119 larger and

more residential style suites. The latest addition is the Sunset Beach pool complex, which features a sparkling white-sand beach.

The resort is home to two celebrity chefs. Michael Mina has an outpost of his popular Bourbon Steak here, with an extensive whiskey list, and Richard Sandoval operates a fine dining Mexican eatery in the hotel and restaurant, and has a rum and cigar bar at the golf clubhouse. The Princess is especially popular with golfers playing the TPC courses, which are immediately adjacent to and operated by the hotel, but is also frequented by those playing elsewhere who want the full, high-energy resort experience, though this can also come with a convention feel as the property hosts many corporate events and outings.

The TPC has two courses, and both were recently and extensively renovated with new bunkers, greens and tees. The most popular by far is the Stadium Course (Rating: A-), originally

designed by Jay Morrish and Tom Weiskopf, and home to the annual Waste Management Phoenix Open. This is the mostattended golf tournament on earth, "the Greatest Show on Grass," a combination sports spectacle and giant outdoor party held each January.

Golf fans will instantly recognize its par-3 16th, which sits in a stadium, an enclosed amphitheater the size of a Major League Baseball field. It can hold 16,000 fans. Tiger Woods once wowed the thunderous crowds here with a magical hole in one. The structure is dismantled after each tournament, so only visitors in the weeks before and after the event can experience it just like

Cigars In the Desert

Scottsdale offers plenty of places to light up, but its desert climate is the enemy of handmade cigars, which were born in the humid tropics. Never leave your cigars out in the open air (even in your hotel room) as they will dry out quickly. Remember to keep your cigars in a travel humidor or a Boveda bag to keep them supple and smoking well.

These courses and resorts have plenty of cigar-friendly venues, but for even more in the Scottsdale area visit wts.cigaraficionado.com

the pros, but recently the idea has been floated of leaving the stadium up year round. The par-5 13th is also well-known for another Woods moment. This is where his 1999 tee shot came to rest near an enormous boulder, and a group of spectators moved the one-ton rock to allow him to play his shot. (Don't expect that type of help if you end up in the same predicament.) After the 2016 renovation by Weiskopf, the course is better than ever, with significant strategic improvements to every hole.

The TPC Scottsdale's Championship Course (rating: B) has appreciably less water than its more famous sibling, and significantly more exposed desert waste area, but it's not in the same league as the Stadium course. Designed by Randy Heckenkemper, the Championship course is a bit squeezed in at the edge of the property, some holes are marred by highway traffic in the sight lines



and one is even set between office buildings and the perimeter. Its main appeal is as a warm up, or as a second round when playing the Stadium layout.

The Fairmont has plenty of options for cigar lovers. Chef Sandoval's Toro Latin Restaurant & Rum Bar has more than 150 rums, a good-sized cigar list and a large, outdoor patio where you can smoke, eat and drink. There are a few other smoking patios around the clubhouse, and they sell cigars on the beverage carts, as well as at the Midway Grille and at the Champions Grille. It's an impressive array including Ashton, Cohiba, Macanudo, Montecristo, Punch, Rocky Patel and Romeo y Julieta.



Lake Forest, IL Maple Plain, MN JUNE **AUG** of 14 regional events across the United States. Entry Fee \$950 Entry Fee: \$600 **Harbour Town Golf Links Fazio Foothills Golf Course TPC Sugarloaf** 26 01 10 Hilton Head Island, SC Duluth, GA Austin, TX JUNE **APRIL AUG** Entry Fee \$650 Entry Fee: \$650 Entry Fee: \$950 The Stadium Course at CordeValle Golf Club 15 Philadelphia Country Club 29 01 **TPC Scottsdale** San Martin, CA Gladwyne, PA **APRIL AUG** JULY Scottsdale, AZ Entry Fee \$1,100 Entry Fee: \$1,000 Entry Fee: \$650 The Club at Carlton Woods **Caves Valley Golf Club** 09 **Duke University Golf Club** 05 29 The Woodlands, TX Owings Mills, MD **AUG** Durham, NC **APRIL SEPT** Entry Fee \$650 Entry Fee: \$1,200 Entry Fee \$600 **Trump National Golf Club** 17 Old Marsh Golf Club 01 12 The Club at Snoqualmie Ridge

Snoqualmie, WA

Entry Fee: \$650

up for the Challenge!

FIND OUT MORE AND **REGISTER AT E4AGOLF.COM**



Entry Fee: \$725

MAY



Palm Beach Gardens, FL

The 2019 Els for Autism Golf Challenge consists







THANK YOU TO THE **2019 GOLF CHALLENGE SPONSORS**

SEPT

Bedminster

Bedminster, NJ

Entry Fee \$1,500

Wine Spectator

Presented By



Four Seasons Scottsdale at Troon North

The Monument course at Troon North, famous for its namesake towering boulder in the middle of the third fairway, is the design that put desert courses and Scottsdale on the world golf radar and is considered the prototype of the region's many highly acclaimed layouts. It also ushered in the high-end daily fee, or "member for a day" public experience when it opened in 1989. Troon North Golf Club has two 18s, Monument (Rating: A-) and Pinnacle (A-), both known for showcasing giant granite boulders and eerie rock formations with frequently elevated tee boxes that overlook the fairways, and a surprising amount of elevation change and contour.

Both courses are visually stunning, and both are ranked in the Top 100 You Can Play by *Golf Magazine*, but this comes with a caveat. Monument, the original course by Jay Morrish and Tom Weiskopf, was long the region's highest-ranked design. But when the second course here opened, called Pinnacle, and designed by Weiskopf as a solo project, it didn't live up to its older sibling's lofty reputation. It had a nearly half-mile gap between holes at one point, making it unwalkable. So, a decade later, the two courses were rerouted, creating two walkable layouts. It improved the quality of Pinnacle, but lowered that of Monument, leaving two very good courses instead of a stunner and a good one.

Most guests who never played the original Monument don't really notice, and enjoy these two quite memorable desert golf experiences, which are augmented by the state's only Four Seasons hotel, a luxury resort hidden among the rocky canyons of Scottsdale's northern suburbia, giving it an escapist vibe. The hotel just underwent a \$13 million renovation that included new contemporary decor, furnishings and artwork in all 210 casitas and suites. Its casita-style, low-rise adobe wings feature large rooms with gas fireplaces and Southwestern flair. For cigar lovers, the hotel has a pronounced indoor/outdoor emphasis, with all accommodations featuring large balconies or ground floor patios, some with outdoor firepits, while half now include 60-inch outdoor televisions. The culinary options are more fun than the sometimes staid luxury brand's typical offerings, with a fine-dining Spanish steakhouse, Talavera, and a bit of Old West flair at Proof, which specializes in American comfort foods and boasts a deep Bourbon list. There is also an upscale craft cocktail bar, Onyx, and second watering hole poolside, along with 18 private cabanas. The Onyx Bar and Lounge has a humidor with about a dozen top-name choices, and guests are permitted to smoke on the patio.

The Boulders

Many of Scottsdale's top courses are clustered in the northern suburbs, and here in aptly named Carefree is one of the region's longest running luxury resorts, the Boulders, which went through a massive, multimillion-dollar renovation in 2017. The Boulders embraces the rocky, rugged desert setting, most famously in its 160 freestanding casitas—there are no conventional hotel "rooms" here. These irregularly shaped individual units look like they were dropped in from "The Flintstones." They are spacious, boast woodburning fireplaces and private patios, and have all-new interiors.



The Talking Stick Shadows Cigar Lounge is a cigar aficionado's haven, with an impressive selection of Scotches and cigars.

The spa was also redone, and is huge relative to the size of the resort. Stretching over 1,300-acres, the resort has hiking, tennis and other outdoor activities, including its own gorgeous 36-hole desert golf facility, with a clubhouse so extensively renovated it is essentially new, with a bar, outdoor cocktail patio and a new restaurant.

There are humidors in the main lobby bar and golf clubhouse, with a dozen brands including such rarities as Fuente Fuente OpusX and Liga Privada. All guest casitas and villas have private patios for smoking, and there are numerous outdoor fireplaces with seating at the restaurants.

The Boulders Golf Club is sometimes overlooked by visitors not staying here, but should not be missed. It has two classic Jay Morrish desert layouts, North (B+) and South (B+). Both are beautiful, strategically challenging and extremely well maintained, often with the area's best conditions. Each course showcases the 12-million-year-old rock formations on the site, with stacks of boulders behind greens framing approaches, and many holes require careful shot placement due to ravines. The putting surfaces are bentgrass, expensive to maintain but better for play. You'll find more water on the South course, but it is a little bit shorter. The resort has a stellar practice facility, and almost everyone who stays or visits plays both. You should too.

Talking Stick Casino Resort

Markedly different from the other top lodging choices in town, Talking Stick is a full-blown casino hotel, with all the 24/7 excitement, lights, sounds and cocktails that go with it—it's either your style or it is not. But the 36-holes here, designed by Bill Coore and

Go Time

Spring and fall are absolutely perfect peak season in the Scottsdale area. Winter mornings get a bit chilly, but it is still one of the best choices in the Continental United States, with February highs in the mid-70s. Summer is famously hot, consistently over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, but as the mercury rises prices drop astonishingly, making summer in Scottsdale arguably the best value in great golf anyplace. As a result, there really is no bad time of year for Scottsdale golf. -L.O.



Ben Crenshaw and managed by Troon Golf, are absolutely for everyone. The resort is closer to downtown Scottsdale than its rivals to the North, and the terrain is radically different. Instead of target-style designs that require you to hit from one patch of green to the next, these feature wall-to-wall turf with almost no trees. The risk/reward choices are subtle but constant, with almost every hole offering a tighter driving line that pays off with a much easier approach shot. This requires real consideration on the tee, and is especially poignant when playing it a second time. You can make easy bogies by playing it safe and seize birdies by taking risks.

The challenging O'odham course (A-) has heavily bunkered greens, thick, penal brush, and is considered the marquee layout, but in many ways the Piipaash course (A-) is more scenic, varied and fun. They complement each other.

Even though it's just off the highway and a more urban location, Talking Stick has an oasis feel, with no homes visible from the courses and little around it, with expansive vistas of the McDowell mountains. The hotel has a wide range of rooms and suites, as well as the broadest array of dining options of any top resort here. The casino is notably home to Shadows Lounge, a hidden and considerably large indoor and outdoor cigar bar. It has an impressive drink list, with around 50 single malts. You'll also find cigars at the golf club (Fuente, Macanudo, Punch, Romeo y Julieta) and you can smoke on the patio around a large fire pit overlooking the courses.

We-Ko-Pa Golf Club

Of all the great 36-hole facilities in Scottsdale, We-Ko-Pa is the best, and worth the trip wherever you are staying. You can stay on site at the We-Ko-Pa Resort, but it is somewhat remote and not on par in terms of the luxury available in the area. The casino here is 34 years old, with plans for a new one scheduled for 2020.

But you must come for the golf, for We-Ko-Pa has the two highest-ranked Scottsdale courses by *Golf Magazine*. Cholla (rating: A), designed by Scott Miller in 2002, came first, and was followed by Saguaro (A) in 2007 by Coore and Crenshaw. All 100-plus bunkers on Saguaro were redone as part of a course upgrade at the end of 2018. The minimalist courses combine the best of the local desert beauty and dramatic landscape with risk/reward decision making. On almost every hole (other than the par 3s) the golfer has a wide range of choices of clubs to hit, and

you might tee off with everything from a low iron to a fairway wood in addition to a driver during a round.

The courses at We-Ko-Pa are among the most walkable in the region. Both are so good it is hard to choose between them, so many visitors play both in the same day. They sell cigars in the clubhouse and on beverage carts and have three different smoking areas, including a very large covered patio between the pro shop and main restaurant, the We-Ko-Pa Grille. There is also a cigar-friendly patio at the smaller Saguaro Grill satellite restaurant.

Grayhawk Golf Club

The club championship boards at Grayhawk are filled with famous names. The two layouts have hosted a number of high-profile events, and have long served as a pro-am venue for the Waste Management Phoenix Open. From 2020 to 2022 it will host the NCAA Men's and Women's National Championships.

The Raptor course (B+) was designed by Tom Fazio and stretches just over 7,000 yards, with generous fairways and large greens, but plenty of protection in the form of deep greenside bunkers, harsh desert waste and water. Talon (B+) was done by David Graham and Gary Panks. It is known for its large, multitiered greens, confidence inspiring to the eye but reducing their effective size, and unlike its neighbor, has little penalty for missing the greens, encouraging a lot of up and down heroics.

Both courses throw a little bit of everything at the visitor—if it's your first stop you might feel shock and awe. There is plenty of desert, plus creeks, ravines, elevation changes, mountain vistas, do-or-die heroics, deep, railroad-tie-faced bunkers, an island green and even a five-tiered waterfall next to the final hole on Talon. In terms of design, Talon and Raptor are not held in as high esteem as We-Ko-Pa and Troon North, but they are plenty of fun.

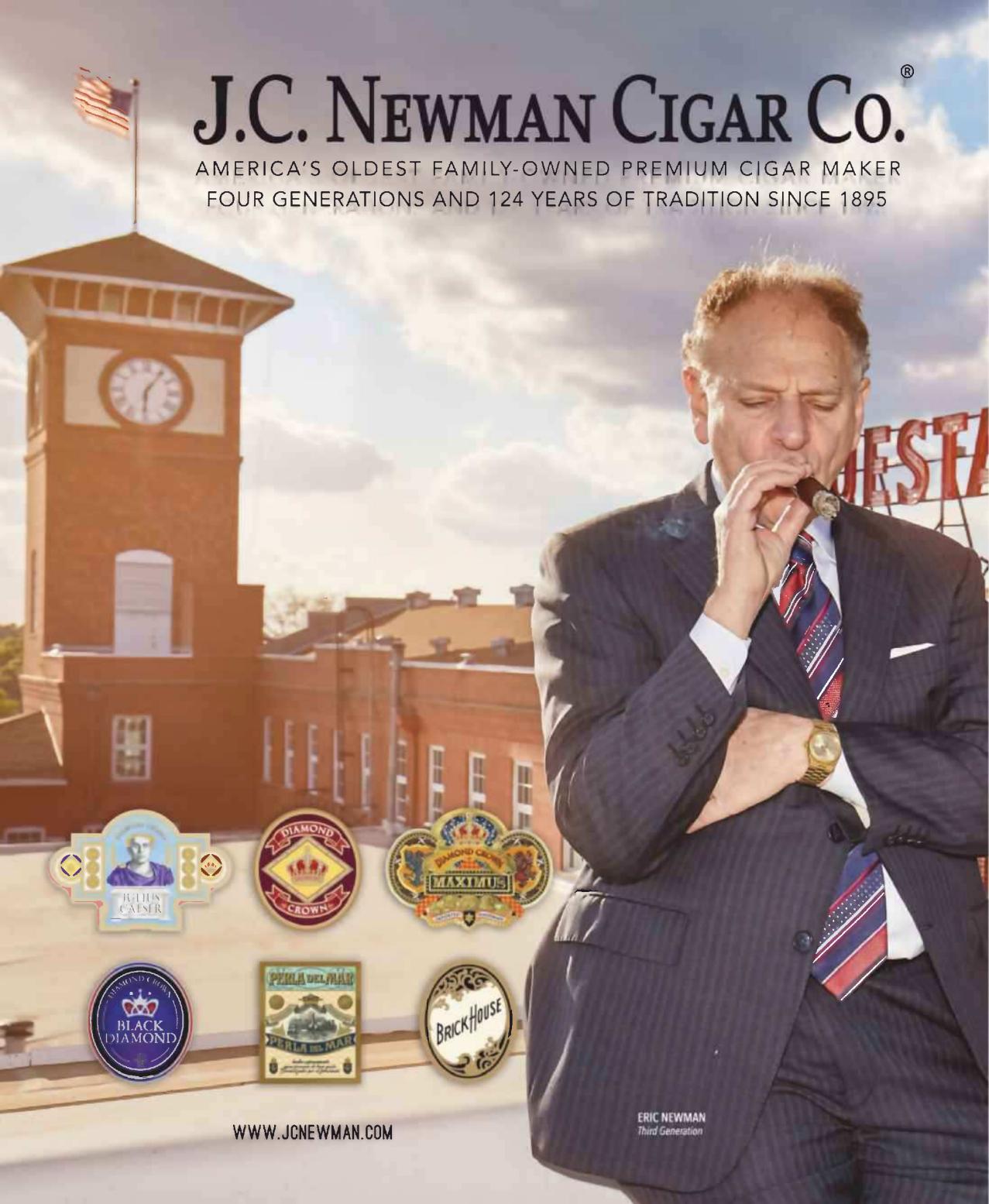
Grayhawk, which has no on-site lodging, has a long affiliation with Phil Mickelson. Phil's Grill is named after him, and the restaurant has a humidor with offerings from Macanudo, Ashton, Romeo y Julieta, Punch, and a cigar-friendly patio.

Most visitors enjoy lunch at Phil's Grille between rounds. Then again, most visitors to Scottsdale enjoy everything about their golf trip. �

Larry Olmsted is a Cigar Aficionado contributing editor.

WELCOME TO WHISKY'S BEST KEPT SECRET







Whiskytest The Leading Whisky Festival In North America

WASHINGTON, DC SAN FRANCISCO

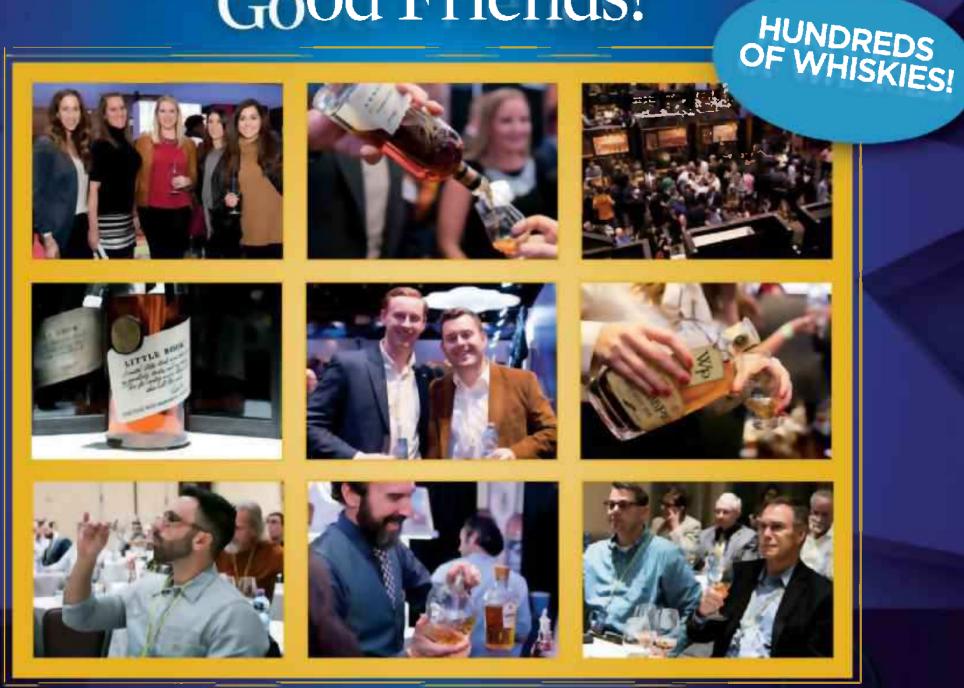
NEW YORK

April 10, 2019

October 4, 2019

Decmber 3, 2019

Join Us For a Night of Good Whiskies, Good Food, Good Friends!





- Meet the distillers and master blenders.
- Attend in-depth Tasting Seminars by whisky experts—no additional cost!
- Enjoy a gourmet buffet all evening.
- Special Bonus: Receive a one-year subscription to Whisky Advocate magazine*.

Order Tickets at WhiskyFest.com





Not so long ago, the young Japanese whisky industry didn't have that cache—at least among the uninitiated. In 2005, when Bill Murray mugged with mock intensity in the movie *Lost in Translation* about "Suntory time," his passion played like a goof to American audiences. Today, you'd be doing yourself a disservice by not recognizing that it is time for a host of excellent Japanese whiskies that translate into brilliant partners for cigars.

In less than a decade, Japanese whisky imports to America have grown some thirtyfold, going from 13,000 proof gallons in 2010 to 401,000 in 2017 according to *Impact Databank*. That not only includes the blended whiskies for which the country had been most known internationally, but some of the exalted single malts that are finally reaching our shores.

One impediment to Americans embracing Japanese whisky has been the supply conundrum: A market can't grow without available goods, but the goods often don't become available without growth. That barrier is crumbling. The above-mentioned Whisky of the Year, Nikka Whisky From the Barrel, holds cult status among whisky cognoscenti and has been around for three decades, but wasn't shipped here. That changed in 2018.

Another stumbling block has been perception. A pervasive feeling was that Japanese whisky was simply a poor imitation of

Scotch without an identity of its own. You can dismiss the descriptive "poor" right away. Japanese liquor is of high quality and not particularly cheap, with many bottles retailing for hundreds of dollars. Hibiki 17, for example, carries a pricetag of \$150, when you can find it. Yamazaki 18 sells for \$250. And while it undeniably occupies a space near Scotch on a tasting wheel, Japanese whisky has its own distinct character, with a separate sensibility and its own particular tasting notes. The easy cliché of cultural comparison would be that Japanese whisky is exotic and ethereal next to forthright Scotch. Translated into straightforward tasting notes, that means you'll find such Asian flavors as ginger, eucalyptus, plum, sandalwood and incense in Japanese versions.

The notion of a Scotch/Japanese connection didn't appear out of thin air. The two whiskies have a long history, which also happens to be the basis for the soap opera "Massan." While the television show takes liberties with the facts for added drama, the general story is correct. Masataka Taketsuru, a talented young distiller, traveled to Scotland in 1918 to study chemistry at the University of Glasgow. After apprenticing at three distilleries, he returned with a Scots wife, Rita Cowan, and a purpose: to make "real whisky" in Japan. Taketsuru went to work for Shinjiro Torii, a liquor dealer who founded what would become Suntory. Together they opened the Yamazaki distillery in 1923. Taketsuru would split from Torii and, with his wife, founded the Yoichi distillery in 1934. The resulting company would become Nikka.



The Pairings

For us an important measure of a spirit is how it plays with a smoke. We paired a selection of Japanese whiskies with two cigars: the Alec Bradley Prensado Lost Art Churchill, a rich and earthy smoke with notes of graham cracker and chocolate-covered raisins, and the Arturo Fuente Don Carlos Robusto, which shows a mix of spice, caramel and nougat.

HAKUSHU 12 YEARS 86 proof, \$85

Suntory established its second distillery in 1973 in a mountainside forest and this single malt reflects the venue with the freshness of spicy sandalwood, honey, lemon and ginger, with just a wisp of peat. The Alec Bradley gives the whisky hearty notes and gets back more complexity as well as a chunky core. The Fuente's chalk quickly turns richer and its caramel more substantive. The whisky gets a cheddar note.

HAKUSHU 18 YEARS

86 proof, \$250

An extra six years in the mountains on the older Hakushu gives the 18-year-old malt big caramel and toast notes to go with its honey, mint and ginger flavors. The finish is very long. Spice exudes from the Alec Bradley with the addition of the Hakushu, but the cigar doesn't return the favor much. The Fuente becomes smoother and boosts the whisky's extensive finish.

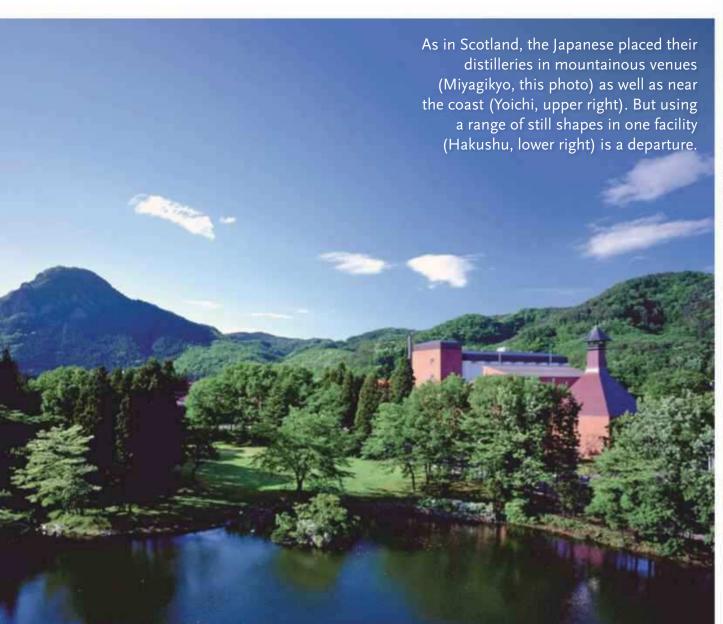
HIBIKI 17 YEARS 86 proof, \$150

Hibiki is one of our favorite blends—worldwide—and its name, meaning harmony, explains why. A sweet, fruity, oily, almost Bourbon nose becomes complex on the palate, with caramel, maple, cocoa, berries, orange peel and hazelnut, before a very long, sweet and creamy finish. The Alec Bradley finds perfect balance here, especially with the maple, and the whisky picks up some solid earthy notes. With the Fuente it's a song-and-dance number, also very balanced, but with leather appearing on the cigar. The blend becomes richer as well.

MIYAGIKYO SINGLE MALT

90 proof, \$80

Miyagikyo, Nikka's second distillery, was built in 1969 in a more southerly mountain region, in direct contrast to its Yoichi distillery. Made with very little peat, this malt shows off a range of fruits, including pears and peaches, as well as cinnamon and ginger spices. The whisky gets big and creamy alongside the Fuente, while the cigar turns salty. With the whisky, the Alec Bradley oozes with sugar. This pairing may be too cloying for some.







NIKKA COFFEY MALT WHISKY

90 proof, \$75

Using a Coffey (or column) still with barley malt makes this Miyagikyo whisky quite the rarity. The arrangement vibrantly calls to mind dark rum and Irish whisky with its cocoa butter, banana and bread dough notes. The Alec Bradley is tempered with suave nuance, while the rum on the whisky morphs into toffee and coffee. The Fuente pairs well with the rum and bananas, becoming chunky and sweet, but doesn't give much in return.

NIKKA TAKETSURU PURE MALT

86 proof, \$70

This substantial whisky is made with a blend of malts from the Miyagikyo and Yoichi distilleries, combining Bourbon, Sherry and new American oak casks. The balanced mixture includes notes of hard candy, toffee and wisps of smoke. The Fuente grabs warmth and caramel from the whisky and enlivens the malt's Bourbon. The Alec Bradley binds with the whisky's sweetness with poignant results as the Bourbon character lends substance.

NIKKA WHISKY FROM THE BARREL

102.8 proof, \$65

The Whisky Advocate Whisky of the Year took that plaudit for a reason. This blend is the antidote to malt snobbery, with its mix of stone fruits, Eastern (ginger) and Western (white pepper) spices as well as toffee, butterscotch and maple. Its a nuanced match with the Alec Bradley, which gave nougat and cinnamon graham cracker as the dividends. The Fuente took on sweetness and spice. The whisky showed off its latent peat and toast.

YAMAZAKI 12 YEARS

86 proof, \$85

Made in the original Suntory distillery, this single malt is candied with citrus and meaty fruits that feature nectarine as well as creamy vanilla and a slight toast that becomes peaty on the finish. Stilton cheese flavor arises on the whisky in the Alec Bradley pairing. The cigar gets a welcome apricot note. Both become spicy. The Fuente is fairly fueled by the whisky, quickly getting to its nougat notes and imparting more smoke to the whisky.

YAMAZAKI 18 YEARS

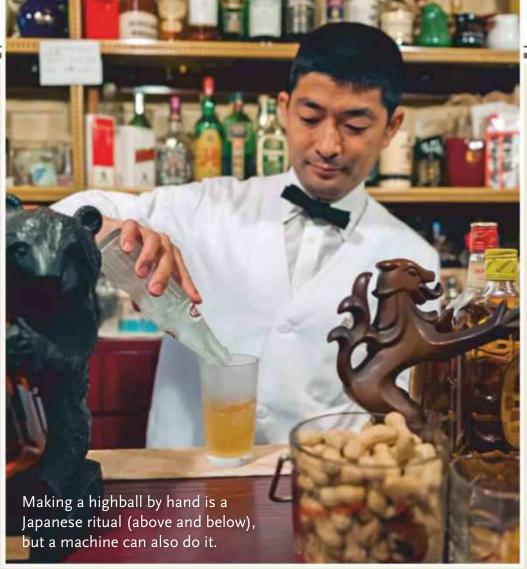
86 proof, \$250

The distillery's older malt displays a preponderance of Sherry cask aging with a floral and fruit character. A caramel and vanilla nose becomes candied on the palate with dark fruits, molasses and wood. The finish is extended with barrel flavors and still more fruit. With the Alec Bradley the fruity note is boosted, while the cigar also gets sweeter. The Fuente imparts spice to the whisky, and is repaid with a hearty tone.

YOICHI SINGLE MALT

90 proof, \$80

Yoichi was Nikka's original distillery, built by Masataka Taketsuru in 1934 on the coastal plains of the northernmost of Japan's three main islands. As such the whisky absorbs sea spray, reminiscent of Islay, to go with meaty fruit, nuts and peat. The Alec Bradley melds happily with the whisky's fruit and cocoa and repays it with an earth foundation. The Fuente takes fruit flavor and salt to go with its chalk, while returning some hearty notes.



The Highball

The highball cocktail (simply whisky, ice and water or soda) may be an American invention, but the Japanese elevated it to high art. Mixing what the Japanese call mizuwari can be a ritual that includes ice cubes hand cut out of blocks and precise numbers of stirs with exacting technique. Since the ceremony is not likely to be accurately recreated in many American bars, Suntory created the Toki Highball Machine, named for the brand's blended whisky brand. The tap device—similar in format to a beer keg—blends high-pressure soda water with whisky as it goes in the glass. The default setting for the whisky-to-soda ratio is the Japanese standard (i.e., rather weak) but it can be customized. So far only available in commercial establishments, the device has appeared in more than 70 bars in just its first year in the United States. The fact that it isn't being marketed to the general public may not be a bad thing. Those mizuwaris go down way too easy.





The two men weren't the first to make whisky in the country. But they did create the first dedicated whisky distilleries (that is, they weren't Sake or fruit liqueur facilities that made whisky on the side). Like many Scotch distilleries they were located in vales, near excellent water sources, and they borrowed the shapes of their copper pot stills from Scottish examples.

Despite any efforts to replicate the Scotch style, the new venue would end up putting its own stamp on the spirit. One reason was a matter of national taste. The Japanese people often preferred light blends to use as part of a highball. After Suntory's first blend proved too heavy and smoky, subsequent efforts reflected Japanese preferences.

The two countries also take different approaches to the business of blending. In Scotland, blenders can procure a host of single malts from among the 100 or so distilleries in that country to create their distinct products. No such trading between distillers and blenders exists in Japan. To achieve complexity, a blender must create a range of components. One way to do that is to operate more than one distillery, using different venues. Suntory has three: Yamazaki, Hakushu and Chita.

Nikka has two: Yoichi and Miyagikyo. In one facilty a number of styles can be made. Distilleries coax out different flavors using various barley strains, yeasts and peat levels. Other methods are lengthening the fermentation time of the mash or using novel filtration media, such as bamboo.

As with any whisky, the wood in which it is aged is of paramount importance, and the Japanese use many variants. Now a huge company including Jim Beam and several Scotch makers, Suntory has access to a spectrum of casks. But during World II, it was cut off from American and European oak, so mizunara, an indigenous oak, was pressed into service. While that moist wood is more susceptible to leaking, it is still used today for its incense note. For its impressive Hibiki blend, Suntory also finishes some whisky in casks formerly used to store *umeshu*, a popular Japanese plum liqueur.

When you start to consider all the variables available to the industry, you get a sense of how Nikka Whisky From the Barrel can claim to have 100 or more different constituents in its blend. You also begin to understand that when East meets West in the art of whisky making, it is foolish to make facile assumptions. ❖



MILAGRO MEANS MIRACLE





The PIPES of



HISTORY

The standout steakhouse Keens is decorated with tens of thousands of clay pipes harkening back to the smoky days of yore

BYMERVYNROTHSTEIN





Keens, a New York City institution, is decorated with more than 45,000 clay pipes accumulated over the landmark's 13-decade run. They adorn nearly every inch of the ceiling.







hey look like birds in flight. A giant flock, tens of thousands of them, thin and white, gliding across the ceiling at, of all places, a Midtown Manhattan restaurant.

A closer look reveals that they are pipes churchwarden pipes—with long, svelte stems leading to the bowls, reminders of the renowned 134-year history

of Keens, the popular and highly rated steak- and chophouse on West 36th Street near Herald Square. There are 45,000 of them hanging on the ceiling and the walls, with an equal amount in the restaurant's storage area.

These pipes were made for smoking, and that's what Keens' diners did for decades, its rooms filled with the fragrant aromas of its patrons' tobaccos of choice. The rich and famous, the powerful and elite, and the average Joe alike would arrive for dinner, tuck into giant mutton chops or aged steaks, and afterward call for their pipes, carefully numbered and stored in-house, and light up to continue their conversations over smoke.

Among those renowned who had their own pipes here—which are visible today behind glass on the restaurant's walls—were Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover, Will Rogers, Babe Ruth, General Douglas MacArthur, George M. Cohan, Enrico Caruso, Diamond Jim Brady and Albert Einstein.

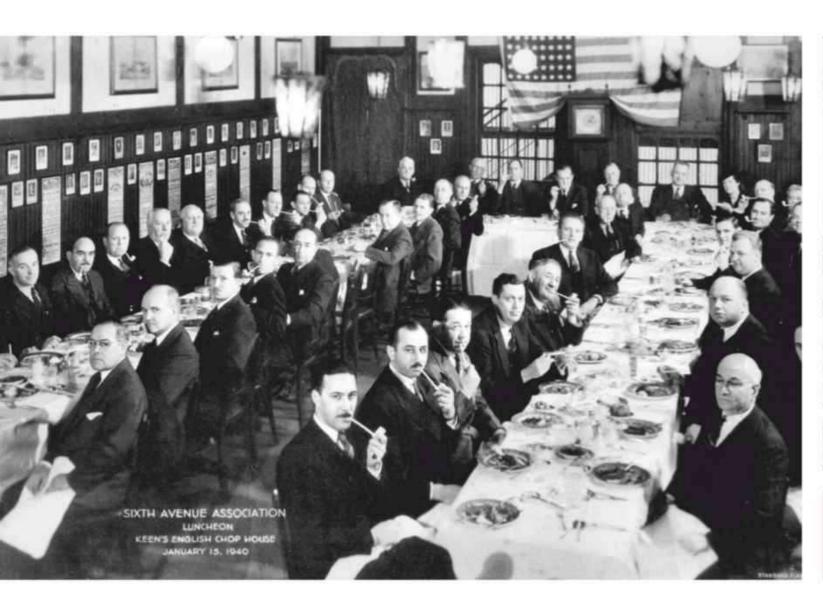
When Einstein, for example, was contemplating the nature of the universe, he would often do so with a pipe between his lips. For the master 20th-century scientist, a pipe was something special. Smoking one, he is reported to have said, contributed "to a somewhat calm and objective judgment in all human affairs." Even when he gave up smoking, he was said to chew on an empty pipe. And one place Einstein would enjoy his pipe—as more than 90,000 other fellow humans would relish theirs—was at Keens.

"It's a special thing to be in a place that has been around all these years," says Bonnie Jenkins, who has been general manager of the restaurant since 1997. "It really does have that feel that it's the real deal. It's not just pretending to be something."

Indeed, visiting the restaurant these days is a bit like traveling back in time to a remnant of the late 19th century—it dates from 1885—while at the same time experiencing a place consistently rated as among the top steakhouses in all of New York City.

The restaurant, which can seat up to 300 diners, retains its yesteryear ambiance with its dark oak-wood paneling, frosted-glass windows, and leather banquettes and booths. More than 500 artifacts festoon the walls, including more than a century's worth of newspaper front pages, theater playbills, vaudeville posters, cartoons, photos,

lithographs and paintings. One is reputed to be the playbill (complete with bloodstains) that President Abraham Lincoln received when he arrived to see the comedy *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater in Washington in April 1865, and was holding when he was shot. (Next to it is a framed newspaper article apparently proving the playbill's provenance.) There's an





Well-dressed Keens patrons (left) chewing on their churchwardens at a 1940 gathering. Above: Retrieving a pipe for a regular.



CHANGE YOUR POINT OF VIEW



>>> Available at the finest tobacconists worldwide.

CIGAR AFICIONADO







An Unabridged Whisky List

ny meal that features slabs of steak as thick as a dictionary deserves fitting bibulous bookends, and at Keens that begins by selecting from a long list of whiskies, with around 240 single-malt Scotches alone.

Veteran malt drinkers will be trans-

ported to a time when the vast majority of single malts bore age statements, often denoting multiple decades in barrel. With its salt-breeze essence, the discontinued Old Pulteney 21 year old (\$28) is perfect to prepare for seafood, while Glenfarclas 25 year old (\$30)

offers the deep red fruit, smooth texture and oak to carry through a steak dinner.

Among the perfect after-dinner punctuation marks are three entries from Scotland's long-closed Brora Distillery, including Brora 2008 Release 25 year old (\$59). This extremely desirable bottle now tops \$1,500 at retail and auction, making a pour of this legendary, muscular whisky a bargain. The entry for 35-year-old Brora (\$89) is one of a handful marked by an asterisk—Keens' code for the last of the bottle, so act fast if you wish to get a taste of these dwindling drams.

Not all of the whisky list dwells in Keens' whisky time capsule. Catering to modern tastes, the bourbon and rye section features craft distillers, like Balcones and WhistlePig. And the Japanese entries span delicate pre-dinner drams from Fukano and Ohishi to rarities like Yamazaki Mizunara 2017 18 year old (\$132).

In this temple of excess, it's fitting to end your meal with a dram from this list, which consistently reaches for the top-shelf.

> —Jeffery Lindenmuth, executive editor of Whisky Advocate

authentic British Royal Coat of Arms carved in oak, an 1880s color lithograph from the Broadway play *Peck's Bad Boy*, and a menu autographed by Joe DiMaggio.

The restaurant has four upstairs rooms, each with a theme. The Lincoln Room displays the presidential-assassination playbill, and also has many political cartoons on the walls. The Lambs Room, the largest, features a sizable 1898 painting of a tiger by the American artist Alexander Pope, as well as photographs of the Shakespearean actors who created the original Lambs Club. The Bull Moose Room honors Teddy Roosevelt and his Bull Moose Party, with a massive head of a bull moose hanging over the fireplace. It has Civil War relics and an interesting birth chart from 1903, which shows that a baby was born every three minutes on the Lower East Side, compared to one every three weeks on the Upper West Side. The Lillie Langtry room honors the actress who successfully turned what was a men's-only dining establishment into a place women could frequent. In 1905, attired in satin gown and feather boa, she was refused entry. She sued, and eventually won. After the suit, Keens, to offset any bad publicity, took out an ad that said, "Ladies are in luck—they can now dine at Keens."

Keens has been known for its pipes, as well as for its food, from its beginnings. Back in the early days of Keens, an era when smoking was ubiquitous in restaurants, you could get your own pipe, as well as a yearly membership in the eatery's Pipe Room, for \$5. Each pipe had a number on the bowl, unique to its owner.

Diners received a membership card, a lifetime membership, with pipe number and name.

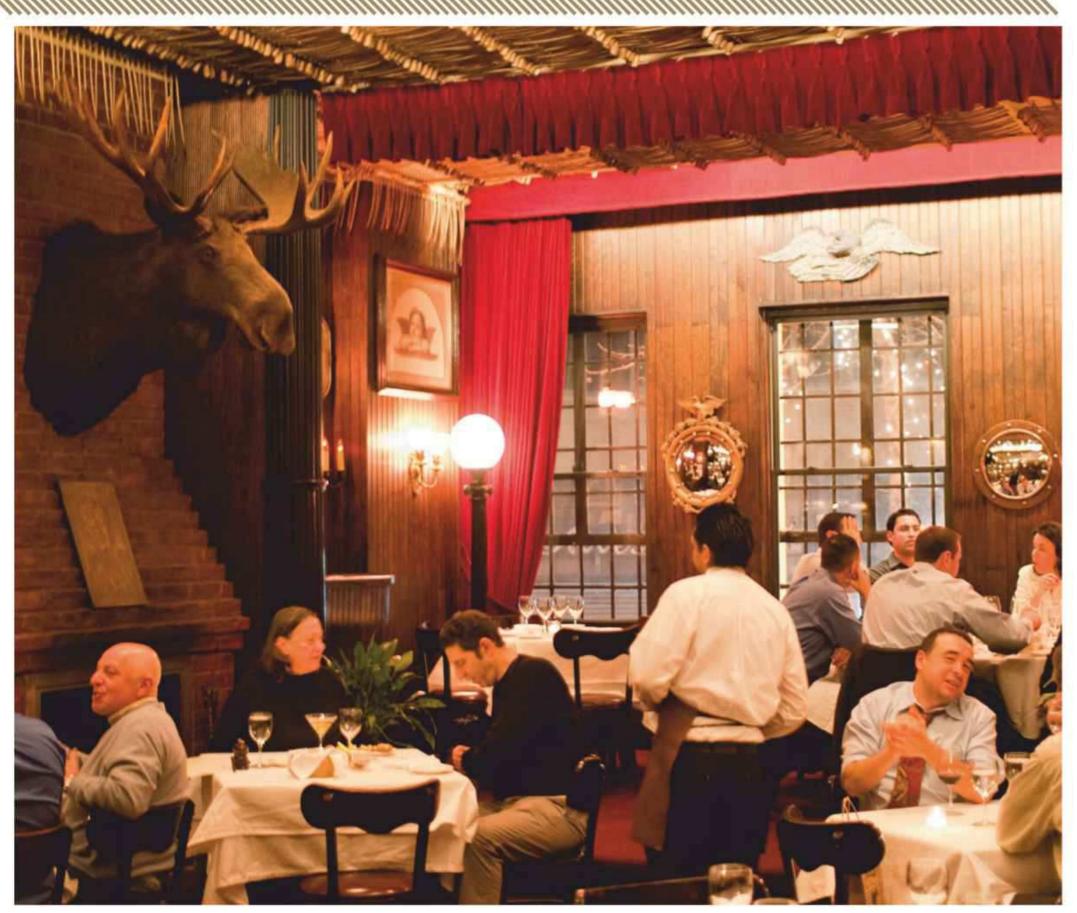
The tradition of leaving one's pipe at an inn or restaurant dates back to 17th-century England, the restaurant says. Unlike a sturdy briar, the thin, clay churchwarden pipes—each measuring about 15 inches long, with a long, slim stem and delicate bowl—were far too fragile for travel. Keens offered to keep them on the premises and bring them to patrons when they dined. A pipe warden guarded the collection of delicate pipes, and pipe boys would carry the appropriate ones to the tables when you wanted to smoke after a meal, often a lunch or dinner of what became the restaurant's signature dish, a two-pound mutton chop.

When a smoker died, his pipe's stem would be ceremonially broken. Friends would gather at the restaurant and sometimes smoke the pipe together. Then they would break the stem of the pipe so no one else could smoke it.

Today, with smoking no longer allowed inside New York City restaurants, current members become honorary pipe members. They can buy a pipe for \$35 (plus tax) and sign it. Keens orders about 1,000 every year, general manager Jenkins says. Most are made in Holland by a company called Royal Delft—Keens is the only customer. Pipes can no longer be stored at the restaurant, but people buy them as keepsakes.

Keens (no apostrophe) Chophouse, as it was first known, was the creation of theater producer Albert Keen. Before 1885, the





A Lamb In Mutton's Clothing

They say you should never ask a lady her age, and so it is with the Keens Mutton Chop. In neither case does it matter. The Keens chop may not technically be old enough to qualify as real mutton, but it's nevertheless unlike any lamb chop or leg you've ever had.

And this intimidating beast—close to two pounds of thick meat and bone made for unapologetic carnivores—is what you should order on your visit. Yes, the steaks are very good, but you can get good steak all over Manhattan. Only at Keens will you find the Mutton Chop.

Keens also calls the cut "mature

lamb" because it's not certifiable mutton. America lost its taste for (and supply of) fully grown sheep back when cigars cost about 10 cents apiece. But they source older-than-normal sheep and procure a cut called the saddle, sawn from the loin of the lamb (between the leg and rib) where one would place a saddle if you could ride such a creature.

Keens butchers the meat so that it has tenderloin in the center with rich, fatty, belly meat wrapped around it, almost like a pair of wings. It's seasoned, broiled and then slow-roasted, to be served on a plate with a bit of lamb jus.



One bite of the \$60 dish and you will be hooked, as the Mutton Chop delivers hearty, slightly gamey and undeniably satisfying flavor no beef can truly match. And don't neglect the sautéed escarole that comes with it—that way you can tell everyone you've had your veggies.

-David Savona

West 36th Street restaurant, in the thick of what was then New York City's theater district, was part of the New York version of the Lambs Club, an organization of actors, composers, comedians and other theater folk that had originated in London and that Keen managed. After Keen opened the independent restaurant, it became known as a theatrical hangout. Performers from the Garrick Theatre nearby would sneak out at intermission in makeup and costume to gird themselves for the second act.

The Keens of 2019 is known for the high quality of its steaks and chops. But the modern version of the legendary mutton chop (see sidebar) is most definitely muttonless, actually a 26-ounce, two-inch-tall saddle of lamb, on the bone. "Sometimes it's slightly bigger, sometimes slightly smaller, though they are weighed," Jenkins says. The change occurred not long after World War II, she says, when mutton fell out of favor among American diners,



Diners tuck away at the beef and lamb under the gaze of those old pipes.

and top-quality mutton became difficult to find. So by the late 1940s, lamb became the more palatable option.

The lamb that makes up Keens mutton chop is definitely a little older than spring lamb, so it has a stronger flavor. "We shoot for about 10 months, and that's mostly for size," says Jenkins. "You want to get a good-size mutton chop."

The mutton chop and Keens are inseparable. "There were always accolades behind the mutton chop," Jenkins says. "It was always sort of unique to Keens." The one millionth serving of the two-pound mutton chop was sold in 1935. It was devoured by Warren T. Godfroy, an insurance man who had been a customer for a quarter century. A procession accompanied the dish to the table, with an employee in a Beefeater costume playing a bugle.

Now of course it's Keens Steakhouse and there are many other choices, though "Chophouse" remains on the sign outside. Traditional and highly rated steakhouse fare—filet mignon, sirloin, prime rib, porterhouse—make up much of the menu, and

are a reason for the restaurant's almost universal high ratings.

Keens is known for its drink as well as its food, particularly its menu of Scotches, a collection begun by George Schwarz, its late owner. The restaurant claims that the thick list (see sidebar) is tops among Manhattan restaurants.

The bar area contains many photos from parties that happened at Keens. One from August 29, 1908, shows the United States Olympic team (all men) at a table. Over the bar itself rests a painting of a reclining and very nubile nude woman—"Miss Keens," named by Schwarz—staring forthrightly at the drinking patrons. It's a typical saloon painting from the late 1890s. No one knows who painted her.

The long story of Keens nearly came to an end 40 years ago. In 1978, Keens was close to shutting its doors for good, racked by the economy and old-age disrepair. New York City itself had been on the verge of financial collapse—three years earlier, its *Daily News* newspaper had announced in large black letters on page one that President Ford had told the city to "drop dead," and the crisis had affected businesses throughout the Big Apple.

The theater district had long moved to Times Square, the Metropolitan Opera, which had been four blocks away and provided many a patron, had moved in the 1960s to Lincoln Center, and old-style restaurants had lost some of their allure. Guard dogs sat in the restaurant after it was closed.

To the rescue rode Schwarz, a Frankfurt, Germany-born physician and restaurateur who fled from Hitler as a child and owned the successful One Fifth and Elephant & Castle in Greenwich Village, and his wife, the Austrian-born artist Kiki Kogelnik. They had an architect look at it who said it would be no trouble to renovate. It turned out to be huge. The renovation took three years, and cost more than \$1.4 million. There was a longer bar, new floors and air conditioning, and cleaning for those endless pieces of history on all the walls. Schwarz died in 2016, Kogelnik in 1997. Today, the restaurant is part of Schwarz's estate.

Keens is once again busy, a New York institution, with diners who tuck away at the hefty servings of beef and lamb under the gaze of those old pipes. When asked, the restaurant will attempt to find the pipes of yesteryear for the owners, relatives or descendants of pipe owners. People call or write, either looking for their own pipe, or perhaps a churchwarden once owned by a loved one. The search isn't always easy. The 1970s renovation and a long-ago fire affected the ease of recovery, so having the number available is usually essential. "If you don't have it, it's nearly impossible, because the records aren't in the best of shape," Jenkins says. "It's a little like finding a needle in a haystack."

Those "needles," even now, remain worth finding, and the sight of those bird-seeming objects on Keens' ceiling and walls elicits smiles, nods of recognition at their illustrious owners, and a mood of excitement at the sense of history, the remembrance of pipes past, that the restaurant evokes. The Victorian English novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote that "a pipe is the fountain of contemplation, the source of pleasure, the companion of the wise."

At Keens, you can find 90,000 of those companions. ❖

Mervyn Rothstein is a CIGAR AFICIONADO contributing editor.

Honey-sweet spices, oak-wood and hints of salt-air.

The smooth finish and gentle flavors of our whisky come from an unhurried process. Patience is our most important ingredient.



IT'S PRONOUNCED OH-BIN.

OBAN



3 CITIES. 3 SPECTACULAR WINE TASTINGS!







LAS VEGAS

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2019 6:00 - 10:00 PM THE MIRAGE

CHICAGO

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2019 6:00 - 10:00 PM NAVY PIER

MIAMI

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2019 6:00 - 10:00 PM FONTAINEBLEAU MIAMI BEACH

VIPS ENJOY AN EXTRA HOUR OF TASTING!
TICKETS STARTING AT \$200









240+ OF THE WORLD'S FINEST WINERIES ALL WINES RATED 90+

ARGENTINA

Achával-Ferrer Alta Vista **Bodegas Salentein** Catena Zapata Cheval des Andes Colomé El Esteco Piedra Negra Susana Balbo Trapiche Viña Cobos Zuccardi

AUSTRALIA

First Drop **Giant Steps** Hickinbotham Innocent Bystander John Duval Leeuwin Estate Mollydooker Penfolds Torbreck Yalumba

AUSTRIA

Laurenz V

CHILE

Almaviva Clos Apalta Concha y Toro Hacienda Araucano Miguel Torres Chile Montes Neven Viña San Pedro Viña Santa Rita

FRANCE

Alsace

F. E. Trimbach

Beaujolais

Château Moulin-à-Vent Maison L'Envoyé

Bordeaux

Château Angélus Château Clarisse Château du Tertre Château Duhart-Milon Château La Gaffelière Château Pape Clément Château Talbot Domaine de Chevalier La Chapelle de la Mission Haut-Brion Le Clarence de Haut-Brion Le Dragon de Quintus

Burgundy

Albert Bichot Domaine Laroche Louis Latour

Champagne

Alfred Gratien Barons de Rothschild Besserat de Bellefon G.H. Mumm Henriot Lanson

Languedoc-Roussillon

Nicolas Feuillatte

François Lurton -Mas Janeil Gérard Bertrand

Loire

Pascal Jolivet

Provence

Château D'Esclans **Domaines Ott**

Rhône

Château La Nerthe Famille Perrin Gabriel Meffre Jean-Luc Colombo

Georges Vigouroux -Château de Haute-Serre

Dr. Loosen Hans Wirsching

GREECE

Ktima Gerovassiliou

Oremus

ITALY

Mastroberardino Friuli/Venezia-Giulia

Bastianich Jermann Livio Felluga Marco Felluga

Ferraton Père & Fils

Southwest France

GERMANY

HUNGARY

Alana-Tokaj

IŞRAEL

Recanati

Abruzzi

Masciarelli

Lombardy Ca' del Bosco

Damilano

Piedmont Aldo Conterno Ceretto

Giovanni Sordo

Marchesi di Barolo

Michele Chiarlo Paolo Scavino Pio Cesare

Renato Ratti

Sardinia

Argiolas

Sicily

Donnafugata Planeta Tasca d'Almerita

Trentino/Alto Adige

Elena Walch Ferrari Trento Nals Margreid

Tuscany Altesino **Antinori** Argiano Bindi Sergardi Brancaia Caiarossa Caparzo Carpineto Casanova di Neri Castellare di Castellina Castello Banfi Castello di Albola Castello di Monsanto Castello di Volpaia Ciacci Piccolomini D'Aragona Fattoria dei Barbi Fèlsina Fontodi Frescobaldi Fuligni La Gerla

SOUTH AFRICA

Tenuta Luce Tenuta San Guido Tenuta Sette Ponti

NEW ZEALAND

Craggy Range

Greywacke

Mud House

PORTUGAL

Casa Ferreirinha

Herdade do Esporão

Quinta do Chocapalha

Quinta do Vale Meão

Prats & Symington

Quinta do Crasto

Quinta do Vallado

Ramos-Pinto

Wine & Soul

Taylor Fladgate

W. & J. Graham

Blandy's

Fonseca

Croft

Poças

Valdicava

Còlpetrone

Umbria

Veneto

Masi

Allegrini

Pieropan

Zenato

Klein Constantia Rust en Vrede

SPAIN

Abadia Retuerta Alto Moncayo Alvear Beronia Bilbainas

Bodegas Familiares Matarromera Bodegas La Caña

Breca Codorníu CVNE El Nido Emilio Moro Familia Torres Godelia

Gonzalez Byass Josep Maria

Rayentós i Blanc La Rioja Alta LAN

Marqués de Cáceres Marqués de Murrieta Marqués de Riscal Muga

Ossian Pago de Carraovejas **Protos** Scala Dei Teso La Monja

URUGUAY Bodega Garzón

Volver

UNITED STATES

California

Adobe Road Alpha Omega Beaulieu **Belle Glos** Benovia Beringer Caymus Chalk Hill Estate Charles Krug Chimney Rock Cirq Crown Point Ernest & Julio Gallo Far Niente Fess Parker

Guarachi Family HALL Heitz Hess Collection Hestan J Vineyards & Winery J. Lohr Kendall-Jackson Louis M. Martini Masút Mt. Brave Mumm Napa **Orin Swift** Patz & Hall Pence

Gary Farrell

Quivira Rodney Strong Roederer Estate Rombauer

Round Pond Estate Rusack Sanford Sangiacomo

Schramsberg

Seghesio Sequoia Grove Stag's Leap Wine Cellars

Tablas Creek The Calling The Donum Estate Trinchero Napa Valley

Oregon

Elk Cove Lingua Franca Résonance

Virginia

Barboursville

Washington

Chateau Ste. Michelle Col Solare K Vintners

A souvenir Riedel™ glass and a delicious buffet included with every ticket

Lamole di Lamole

Rocca delle Macie

Tenuta di Biserno

Mazzei

Poliziano

San Felice

San Filippo

Siro Pacenti

MICALLEF CIGARS

















Building a whole new cigar experience.







churchills.

The Villiger La Vencedora Churchill was one of the highest-rated cigars in this entire issue, scoring 94 points. The cigar is made for Villiger at the Joya de Nicaragua factory in Estelí, Nicaragua. If the brand seems vaguely familiar it's because Villiger first released it in 2005 as a mild cigar with a light, Connecticut wrapper. In 2012, Villiger discontinued the unexciting line, but rebooted it early last year—and it couldn't be any more different. Full bodied and flavorful, this dark Churchill is now a complete smoke with a base layer of richness, sweet mid-palate and creamy top notes. At 93 points, the E.P. Carrillo Core Plus Maduro Churchill Especial No. 7 also occupies the dark and rich register with a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper that harmonizes beautifully with Nicaraguan tobacco. The cigar is made in the Dominican Republic by Ernesto Perez-Carrillo, maker of CIGAR AFICIONADO'S Cigar of the Year. Perez-Carrillo has become known for creating cigars with thick ring gauges, but here, he exercises some restraint by making a bold blend in a classic, elegant size. A quartet of other cigars, three of them Dominican, scored in the 90s.



NICARAGUA

VILLIGER LA VENCEDORA CHURCHILL

04

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

There's a sweet, nutty quality to this toothy Churchill, which imparts notes of cedar wood, almonds and caramel before a creamy finish reminiscent of an oatmeal cookie. Complex and satisfying.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

CHURCHILL ESPECIAL NO. 7
As this dark, toothy Churchill burns, chocolatey and nutty impressions unfold around a hearty core of wood.

E.P. CARRILLO CORE PLUS MADURO

The draw is open, the burn, quite even.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

93



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: MEXICO

PADILLA VINTAGE RESERVE CHURCHILL

The draw of this toothy, box-pressed Churchill delivers big notes of leather and nuts braced by touches of anise and toasted vanilla. The finish hints of sweet nougat.

U.S.: \$9.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: INDONESIA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROOM101 FARCE CONNECTICUT CHURCHILL

A tan Churchill that produces lots of thick, creamy smoke. It's a nutty, woody cigar with pleasant touches of cloves, nougat and vanilla.

U.S.: \$11.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ASHTON VIRGIN SUN GROWN SORCERER

The superb draw of this box-pressed Churchill imparts notes of raisin and cocoa that meld pleasantly with hints of licorice, almonds and espresso bean.

U.S.: \$12.70 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA FLOR DOMINICANA LA VOLCADA

Draped in an oscuro cover leaf and topped with a pigtail cap, this oily churchill burns evenly. Its dry, earthy smoke shows notes of nougat, leather and licorice before a spicy finish.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

AGANORSA LEAF CONNECTICUT

CHURCHILL

Crafted with a sandy-hued cover leaf, this well-made Churchill offers notes of toasted almond, coconut and nougat before a spicy, gingersnap finish.

U.S.: \$8.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ARCHETYPE INITIATION CHURCHILL

A matte-brown Churchill that produces a sturdy white ash as it burns. Its nutty, chewy smoke is interspersed with hints of molasses and vanilla.

U.S.: \$12.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6 3/4" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

H. UPMANN CONNECTICUT BY GRUPO DE MAESTROS CHURCHILL

A blond cigar topped with a maduro cap. Light spices and tangy notes of orange peel become sweeter with vanilla and graham cracker, but the finish is a bit dry.

U.S.: \$8.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HIGHCLERE CASTLE CHURCHILL

Notes of butterscotch and sugared almonds set a sweet tone for this blond Churchill, which also has hints of lemon, citrus and chocolate before the woody finish.

U.S.: \$16.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS,
NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

MACANUDO INSPIRADO ORANGE CHURCHILL

Tangy and peppery, this oily Churchill shows notes of gingersnap, oak and minerals, though the finish is charry. The draw and burn are even throughout.

U.S.: \$7.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ASHTON HERITAGE PURO SOL

CHURCHILL

Veiny and pale in color, this cigar draws and burns evenly, showing a toasty, nutty smoke with heavy vanilla notes, yeasty hints of dough and an herbal finish.

U.S.: \$11.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF WINSTON CHURCHILL THE LATE HOUR CHURCHILL

First puffs of this dark, oily Churchill are leathery and woody, but heavy musty notes overwhelm the cigar.

U.S.: \$20.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

corona gordas.

Cuba's Hoyo de Monterrey Le Hoyo de Río Seco was the top-scoring cigar of this category at 94 points. It's the second release in Cuba's revamped Le Hoyo series, which used to consist of thin cigars. Habanos S.A. revisited the series and decided to introduce much heavier ring gauges to the line. The Le Hoyo de Río Seco is not only the thickest cigar in the Hoyo de Monterrey brand, but one of the thickest cigars in the entire regular-production Cuban portfolio. The San Lotano Requiem Maduro Toro scored 92 points and is made by A.J. Fernandez in Nicaragua. Its bold blend is characteristic of cigars that Fernandez often produces. Note the newly designed bands.



CUBA

HOYO DE MONTERREY LE HOYO DE RIO SECO

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

> WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: OCTOBER 2018**

The lush draw of this toothy cigar delivers nuanced impressions of cinnamon, nutmeg and oak wood before a sweet, caramel finish. Complex and delicious. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £33.20 STRENGTH: Medium



NICARAGUA

SAN LOTANO REQUIEM MADURO TORO

92

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: MEXICO

Draped in a dark, alluring wrapper, this box-pressed cigar offers notes of cocoa, coffee bean and nuts that meld pleasantly with hints of marzipan and sweet raisins.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY FINE & RARE JRS 10=(86) GRAN TORO

91

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA WRAPPER: HONDURAS

Packed with tobacco and firm to the touch, this large cigar has a lush draw and wavy burn. It's a spicy, earthy smoke with notes of cocoa and coffee bean. Some sweeter hints of caramel also emerge.

U.S.: \$21.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

SERINO TAÍNO TORO

91

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

Rustic looking with a closed foot, this large cigar smokes consistently, leaving strong impressions of earth and leather on the palate with underlying hints of minerals. The draw is open, the burn, quite even. U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ARTURO FUENTE AÑEJO RESERVA NO. 46

Visible pores on the dark wrapper give this cigar a rustic appearance. It's a tasty smoke, full of coffee notes and dark chocolate. A hint of anise also comes through before the chestnut finish.

U.S.: \$9.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JULY 2018

BOLIVAR SOBERANO **EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2018**

90

Though the wrapper is veiny and coarse, this cigar delivers a floral, chocolatey smoke with hints of honeyed wood and cashews that lead to a slightly dry finish. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £33.70 STRENGTH: Medium-Full



BOLD START. VELVET FINISH.



Crown Royal
BLACK

A special announcement rom the editors of Cigar Aficionado



Dear Cigar Lover:

Cigar Insider, an e-newsletter from the editors of Cigar Aficionado, is brand new—beautiful design, mobile-friendly and still features cigar ratings you won't find anywhere else!

Twice a month, we'll send you:

- Vertical brand tastings—reviews of entire lines of cigars, showing you how different sizes perform.
- Helpful cigar photos illustrating size and strength.
- Previews of the top-rated cigars coming in future issues of Cigar Aficionado. Be the first to read about the best cigars.
- Interviews with intriguing cigarmakers and tobacco growers from around the world.
- · News about the cigar industry.
- · Ratings of rare cigars.

My best,

Marvin R. Shanken



aficionado

Q Search

Take the next issue of Cigar Insider with you on your next cigar shopping expedition!

Sign up today at CIGARINSIDER.COM



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: HONDURAS** WRAPPER: MEXICO

HERRERA ESTELI NORTEÑO TORO

A box-pressed cigar with an even draw and burn. It's a toasty, woody smoke with nutty notes of almond and light touches of cinnamon, herbs and vanilla. U.S.: \$9.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

MONTECRISTO NICARAGUA SERIES TORO

Enrobed in a light-brown cover leaf, this well-made cigar has notable woody and coffee-like qualities with piquant bursts of red pepper that lead to a nutty finish. U.S.: \$12.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



COSTA RICA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: ECUADOR **BINDER: ECUADOR** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MQBA TORO

The open draw of this well-made cigar produces lots of thick, creamy smoke. Notes of spicy black pepper, chocolate and sweet vanilla build to a woody finish. U.S.: \$14.29 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: OCTOBER 2018

QUAI D'ORSAY

CAPITOLIO EXCLUSIVO FRANCIA This large, well-made cigar is topped with a three-seam cap. It's a nutty, floral smoke with sweet touches of honey and wood. The finish is long and satisfying.

U.S.: N/A FRANCE: 18.30 EURO STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

601 LA BOMBA WARHEAD IV

Enrobed in a dark wrapper and topped with a long pigtail cap glued to its side, this cigar has a lush draw and even burn. Notes of sweet raisins mix with hints of earth before a slightly sour finish. U.S.: \$10.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA**

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROCKY PATEL A.L.R. TORO

This dark, veiny cigar burns evenly. Notes of espresso, wood and earth become slightly nutty before a short finish.

U.S.: \$14.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: COLOMBIA, NICARAGUA,

> BINDER: ECUADOR WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA AURORA PREFERIDOS HORS D'AGE 2017 TORO

Rustic in appearance, this dark cigar imparts an earthy smoke with notes of minerals, fruit and oak that lead to a charry finish.

U.S.: \$20.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

LA BARBA RED 54 X 6

A dark and oily cigar that burns hot at times. It's excessively oily on the palate, with some bitter notes, as well as faint wisps of earth and spearmint. A cigar that needs more balance.

U.S.: \$11.02 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

figurados.

It's a good time to be smoking torpedos, belicosos, pirámides or any other shaped figurado. This section was loaded with high-scoring smokes, most notably the Aging Room Quattro Nicaragua Maestro, which topped the category by scoring 94 points. It's the first time any Aging Room cigar has ever scored so high in our regular tastings. The box-pressed torpedo is made by A.J. Fernandez in Nicaragua for Rafael Nodal, who owns the Aging Room brand. Four cigars scored 92 points. The Fuente Fuente OpusX Perfecxion 888 is a long, thin cigar with a tapered head that ends in an unusual point, and its flavors are clasically Opus: leather, spice, cinnamon. Amidst all the new releases from Cuba, one would be remiss to overlook a classic size like the H. Upmann No. 2. It's as beautiful as it is complex, as is the Micallef Gomez Sanchez 1RA Generacion Leyenda No. 1. The Nicaraguan cigar is a mouthful to say, but a treat to smoke. The Oliva Serie V Melanio is becoming an over-achiever as it consistently earns high scores in this magazine, top spots on our annual Top 25 list and even won the highest honor of all: Cigar of the Year.



NICARAGUA

AGING ROOM QUATTRO NICARAGUA MAESTRO An attractive, box-pressed torpedo that layers the p

94

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

An attractive, box-pressed torpedo that layers the palate with complex intonations of caramel, wood and toasted almond before a rich, chocolatey finish. A delicious cigar.

U.S.: \$10.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 6 7/8"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"

FUENTE FUENTE OPUSX PERFECXION 888

A long, slim cigar that's rolled with an open nipple tip. Its lush draw offers precise notes of leather, cinnamon and cedar wood that meld pleasantly with hints of nuts and spice.

U.S.: \$13.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



CUBA

FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: MARCH 2017

H. UPMANN NO. 2

This tawny-brown torpedo transitions beautifully from a floral, honey sweetness to richer notes of almonds and leather before a complex, maple-walnut finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £26.10 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.,
HONDURAS
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MICALLEF GOMEZ SANCHEZ 1RA GENERACION LEYENDA NO. 1

A long figurado with a tapered head. The lush draw layers the palate with rich notes of chocolate, almonds and creamy vanilla around a woody core. The finish hints of coffee.

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

OLIVA SERIE V MELANIO TORPEDO

U.S.: \$14.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

Nutty and spicy from the start, this box-pressed torpedo's open draw shows piquant layers of horseradish and black pepper balanced by hazelnut and graham cracker impressions.

U.S.: \$13.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA AURORA 107 BELICOSO

A notably oily torpedo with strong, brawny notes of leather and cedar tempered by sweet hints of cinnamon raisin bread that continue on to the finish.

U.S.: \$9.24 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DEBONAIRE DAYBREAK FIRST DEGREE

A petit perfecto crafted with a nipple foot. Its open draw delivers floral and cedary impressions supported by hints of salt, earth and coffee.

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER NO. 2 BELICOSO

U.S.: \$5.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

Oils are seeping from the wrapper of this well-made belicoso. It starts woody and herbal but becomes toasty and a bit heavier with notes of chocolate-covered almonds. The draw and burn are even.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

CUABA DIVINOS

The initially firm draw of this mini-perfecto eventually opens up, offering a toasty, floral smoke with plenty of citrus-like qualities and a finish of ginger and minerals.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £11.80 STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DANIEL MARSHALL BLACK LABEL TORPEDO

This tan belicoso has a woody character that's supported by touches of vanilla and brown sugar. Some inconsistency was noted in the flavor profile.

U.S.: \$9.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

88



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

> WRAPPER: CUBA BOX DATE: MARCH 2017

PARTAGÁS SERIE P NO. 2 (TUBO)

A reddish-brown figurado that burns evenly, delivering floral notes with sweet-and-spicy hints of gingersnap cookie and sharp cedar. The finish is rather short.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £28.10 STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

AVO LE22 30 YEARS PERFECTO

U.S.: \$15.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

This tan perfecto is made with a nipple foot. It burns and draws very evenly, imparting up-front notes of mushrooms and wheat before hints of hay and a dry, woody finish.

0



MEXICO

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, MEXICO
BINDER: NICARAGUA, MEXICO
WRAPPER: MEXICO

CASA TURRENT SERIE 1901 TORPEDO

The open draw of this dark, box-pressed torpedo offers notes of earth and chocolate interspersed with some oily impressions. The finish is charry.

U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

grandes.

Heavy ring gauge cigars continue to displace thinner, more traditional sizes in humidors across the country. The main reason often cited is value. Consumers think they're getting more for their money when the ring gauges go to 60 and over. In this tasting of grandes, the clear standout was the La Antiguedad Toro Gordo, a thick, 60-ring gauge grande whose box-pressing gives it an even more massive, chunky appearance. It scored 92 points and is made by the Garcia family at their My Father Cigars factory in Estelí, Nicaragua. The Antiguedad line generally scores well in the pages of CIGAR AFICIONADO, but the Garcias were able to scale up the blend to hefty proportions and still maintain the character of the cigar. The Rocky Patel Olde World Reserve Corojo Sixty scored 90 points. It's made in Honduras and is a reboot of sorts. Olde World Reserve came out in 2006, but disappeared from the shelves of brick and mortar retailers for quite some time. Now it's back, and like the original release, it's box-pressed, but the band has been updated. Corojo refers to the type of wrapper, which is grown in Honduras by the Plasencia family.



NICARAGUA

LA ANTIGUEDAD TORO GORDO

92

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

Though thick and imposing, this dark, box-pressed cigar is full of sweet, toasty smoke redolent of raisins, toffee and clove. The long finish smacks of crushed walnuts.

U.S.: \$8.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



HONDURAS

ROCKY PATEL OLDE WORLD RESERVE COROJO SIXTY

90

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: HONDURAS

This large, box-pressed cigar smokes well, with toasty notes of wood and graham cracker as well as a hint of chocolate. The finish is sweet.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



HONDURAS

LA PALINA RED LABEL GORDO

89

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

The open draw of this fat cigar shows an herbal and nutty smoke that hints of cocoa and licorice. The finish is slightly chalky.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF BINDER: ECUADOR WRAPPER: MEXICO

MATILDE OSCURA GRANDE

Draped in a dark and oily wrapper, this fat cigar has an airy draw and even burn. It's an earthy, woody smoke with slight hints of char and touches of licorice and coffee bean.

U.S.: \$9.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6 1/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 7000 MADURO Large and imposing, this fat cigar has an open draw and even burn. Notes of chocolate and coffee are buttressed by walnut and coconut impressions.

The finish is charry.

U.S.: \$8.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 64 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

E.P. CARRILLO INCH RINGMASTER NO. 6

Large and imposing, this massive cigar is tangy and cedary with hints of walnut and chocolate. The finish is short.

U.S.: \$14.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: HONDURAS, PANAMA BINDER: ECUADOR WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET GORDO

Log-like in appearance, this thick, dark cigar offers a fruity, floral smoke along with notes of coffee and minerals, but the finish is acidic.

U.S.: \$9.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

COHIBA NICARAGUA N60

A plump cigar rolled in a very dark and oily cover leaf. Its thin, wispy smoke vaguely hints at cocoa and cloves before a predominantly oaky, woody finish.

U.S.: \$17.79 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

BRICK HOUSE MADURO MIGHTY MIGHTY

Damp earthiness and a charry finish bookend fleeting notes of coffee fruit and almonds. The draw and burn are even and clean.

U.S.: \$7.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

FRATELLO NAVETTA GORDO ENTERPRISE

The earthy, malted chocolate notes of this thick cigar become a bit musty before the woody finish. Some inconsistency was noted on the draw.

U.S.: \$12.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PARTAGAS 1845 EXTRA FUERTE GIGANTE

Every puff of this black, oily log of a cigar shows lots of licorice and clove notes along with some molasses and leather, but a damp, gritty finish affected the score.

U.S.: \$7.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA COLORADO GORDO REAL

Sharply pressed and spongy to the touch. The draw is faint, offering a woody smoke with a touch of cocoa powder sweetness and some black pepper, but hints of mushroom and a sharp aftertaste affected the score.

U.S.: \$10.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

85



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

UNDERCROWN SHADE GORDITO

A plump, blond cigar that burns somewhat unevenly. Its dry, somewhat chalky smoke is elevated by toasty impressions and hints of black peppercorn. The finish is short.

U.S.: \$10.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

miscellaneous_

Some cigars just can't be categorized, and for this reason, we created the miscellaneous section. Here is where we rate the short and fat, the unusually skinny or the cigars that just don't fit into our other categories. A great performer among the oddballs is the Montecristo Petit Edmundo, a Cuban cigar that scored 93 points. Turn to this smoke when you're in the mood for a full-sized Edmundo, but just don't have a lot of time. The Asylum Premium 44x4 is a rich, powerful little smoke that packs an earthy punch full of coffee, cocoa and spice. It scored 91 points and owes its power to the all-Nicaraguan blend. At 90 points, the Cuban Partagás Serie D No. 6 is the shortest in the D series.



CUBA

MONTECRISTO PETIT EDMUNDO

93

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 3/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

> WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2016**

Slightly tapered at the head, this short robusto imparts a creamy, velvety smoke rich with coffee bean and dark chocolate notes that take on a sweet. marzipan character.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £19.60 STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA

ASYLUM PREMIUM 44X4

An oily petit corona with a dense, chewy smoke

BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 3 1/2"

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4"

redolent of smoky Sumatra coffee bean, dark cocoa beans and spicy, licorice finish that sticks to the palate. U.S.: \$6.46 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



CUBA

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

PARTAGÁS SERIE D NO. 6

This stubby, short robusto draws well and produces

a sturdy ash. It's sweet-and-spicy with exotic notes of tamarind paste, some cedar and a finish of vanilla

and cloves.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.20 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

BOX DATE: MARCH 2015

LAST CALL MADURO BY AJ FERNANDEZ CORTICAS

89

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF

Rolled with a dark, veiny wrapper and an uncut foot, this stubby little cigar burns evenly, offering toasty notes of oak wood and vanilla before a charry finish.

U.S.: \$6.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



NICARAGUA

REGIUS EXCLUSIVO U.S.A. OSCURO ESPECIAL LANCERO EXTRA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 7 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: MEXICO

Dark and box-pressed, this long, thin cigar has an open, even draw. There are subtle hints of clove and vanilla under predominant notes of cocoa and licorice. U.S.: \$13.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: APRIL 2017

HOYO DE MONTERREY PETIT ROBUSTO

While there was some inconsistency noted in the draw and combustion, this short cigar is salty and nutty with intermittent notes of orange peel, grass and dry woods. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.70 STRENGTH: Medium



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ILLUSIONE 68

A small cigar with an even draw and burn. Woody notes of cedar and citrus are balanced by a bolder foundation of earth and vanilla, but the finish is a bit dry.

U.S.: \$6.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: BRAZIL, NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MY UZI WEIGHS A TON BAIT FISH

Solidly rolled, this petit smoke burns and draws quite evenly. Stony notes of slate and minerals are met with a bold spiciness. The finish is earthy.

U.S.: \$5.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

NAT SHERMAN TIMELESS PANAMERICANA ROBUSTICO

A dark, little cigar with a full draw but slightly uneven burn. Strong notes of wood and dark chocolate build to a slightly nutty finish with a harsh hint of charred wood.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 3/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA BOX DATE: MARCH 2018

QUAI D'ORSAY NO. 50

Topped with a three-seam cap, this veiny robusto has an airy, open draw that delivers a floral smoke with touches of caramel, nuts and wood before a dry finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £16.70 STRENGTH: Medium

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTE BY MONTECRISTO AJ FERNANDEZ CORONA

Covered in a near-black wrapper, this box-pressed little smoke is heavy with notes of cocoa powder and leather, but takes on a dry, woody character and a mineral finish.

U.S.: \$10.92 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 3 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

NUB HABANO 358

The draw of this short, fat cigar is notably firm but offers spicy smoke with hints of ginger and boozy cherry cordial, but the finish is papery and thin.

U.S.: \$7.14 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 4 3/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: FEBRUARY 2016

TRINIDAD VIGÍA

A short, fat robusto with a pigtail cap. It's a predominantly woody smoke with some herbal elements and an ashy aftertaste.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £26.10 STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LUMINOSA PETITE CORONA

A small cigar topped with a round head. As it burns, notes of earth, coffee and spice are dominated by oily and bitter characteristics.

U.S.: \$6.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

robustos_

Cohiba certainly lived up to lofty expectations in this Robusto size, which scored 93 points. It's from the core line, or Línea Clásica, and is among one of the more expensive cigars in the Cuban portfolio. The L'Atelier LAT52 also scored 93 points and is produced in Nicaragua at My Father Cigars. It's virtually identical in size to the Cohiba Behike BHK 52, something brand owner Pete Johnson of Tatuaje fame is not at all secretive about. And considering the score-to-price ratio, this might be one of the better bargains of the issue. The Padrón Family Reserve No. 50 from Nicaragua scored 92 points and was created to celebrate the family-owned company's 50th year in business.



CUBA

COHIBA ROBUSTO

93

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

Complex intonations of oak wood, slivered almonds and vanilla build in intensity and come together quite cohesively. A balanced, flavorful cigar with the perfect amount of resistance to the draw.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £34.30 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

LATEL



NICARAGUA

L'ATELIER LAT52

93

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"

Topped with a pigtail cap, this complex robusto has a spicy, peppery start with interim notes of licorice and sassafras that lead to a core of dark chocolate and coffee

bean. The finish has a pleasant note of black cherry.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN FAMILY RESERVE

NO. 50 NATURAL

Enrobed in a tannish cover leaf, this box-pressed cigar smokes well, showing the rich qualities of wood and chocolate balanced by lighter hints of herbs and spice.

U.S.: \$25.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA

INTEMPERANCE BA XXI BREACH OF THE PEACE

90

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: INDONESIA WRAPPER: BRAZIL

A dark robusto rolled with a tightly cropped shaggy foot. Its earthy, charry smoke shows some spiciness and a black cherry note before an almond-like finish.

U.S.: \$8.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

~ ~



NICARAGUA

JOYA SILVER ROBUSTO

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5" This sharply-pressed cigar is topped with a three-seam cap. Its lush draw offers notes of earth and wood accented by hints of spicy leather and brown sugar.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$7.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

90



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

PLASENCIA COSECHA 146 LA MUSICA

Draped in a reddish-brown cover leaf, this well-made cigar has an even draw and burn. Notes of leather and red pepper are balanced by sweet touches of vanilla.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

EL REY DEL MUNDO CHOIX SUPREME

Though the wrapper of this robusto has a beautiful, reddish-brown color, it's riddled with kinky, sharp veins. The smoke is toasty and woody with hints of coffee

bean, oak and dried fruit.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.70 STRENGTH: Medium

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5"

BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2016

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: ECUADOR, NICARAGUA WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

FLORES Y RODRIGUEZ CONNECTICUT VALLEY RESERVE ROBUSTO

Dark and veiny, this robusto produces a flaky ash as it burns. Notes of earth and cocoa intertwine with hints of licorice before a charry finish.

U.S.: \$16 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY DADDY MAC ROBUSTO

Covered in a colorado wrapper, this robusto draws easily. It's a woody, herbal smoke with hints of earth and nuts before a slightly tangy finish.

U.S.: \$9.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: BRAZIL, NICARAGUA
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: MEXICO

GURKHA HERITAGE MADUROROBUSTO CORTO

Initial notes of charry earth eventually pass, ushering in a woody, nutty smoke with hints of pistachio and vanilla.

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL ROBUSTO

U.S.: \$6.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

A sweet and woody smoke with an easy draw and flaky ash. Raisin and cocoa notes are also present but some harsh acidity hurt the score.

U.S.: \$7.52 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

TATUAJE NUEVITAS JIBARO NO. 1

A bit of filler tobacco extends beyond the wrapper of this robusto, which is toasty and oaky with some vanilla notes and a dry, earthy finish.

U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: HONDURAS, DOM. REP.,
NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS

COHIBA BLUE ROTHSCHILD

The firm draw of this short cigar shows notes of earth, coffee and char before a short, somewhat harsh finish.

U.S.: \$9.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/8"
FILLER: BRAZIL, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

SAN PEDRO DE MACORÍS BRAZIL ROBUSTO

This small, rustic-looking cigar has an airy draw and even burn. Hints of earth, wood and nuts are obscured by bitter impressions and an overly charry finish.

U.S.: \$5.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

TOP SCORES, VALUES AND STRENGTH | BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 149

TOP SCORES



94 Aging Room Quattro Nicaragua Maestro
Nicaragua • \$10.95 • Figurado • Medium-Full



94 Hoyo de Monterrey Le Hoyo de Río Seco Cuba • £33.20 • Corona Gorda • Medium



94 Villiger La Vencedora Churchill
Nicaragua • \$10.00 • Churchill • Medium-Full



93 Cohiba Robusto Cuba • £34.30 • Robusto • Medium-Full



93 E.P. Carrillo Core Plus Maduro Churchill Especial No. 7 Dominican Republic • \$8.50 • Churchill • Medium-Full



93 L'Atelier LAT52
Nicaragua • \$8.00 • Robusto • Medium-Full



93 Montecristo Petit Edmundo
Nicaragua • £19.60 • Miscellaneous • Medium-Full



92 Fuente Fuente OpusX PerfecXion 888
Dominican Republic • \$13.75 • Figurado • Medium-Full



92 Oliva Serie V Melanio Torpedo Nicaragua • \$13.99 • Figurado • Medium-Full



92 Padrón Family Reserve No. 50 Natural Nicaragua • \$25.80 • Robusto • Medium-Full

TOP VALUES



91 Asylum Premium 44x4
Nicaragua • \$6.46 • Miscellaneous • Medium-Full



Debonaire Daybreak First DegreeDominican Republic • \$5.99 • Figurado • Medium



89 Last Call Maduro by AJ Fernandez Corticas Nicaragua • \$6.00 • Miscellaneous • Full



88 Illusione 68
Nicaragua • \$6.90 • Miscellaneous • Medium



88 My Uzi Weighs A Ton Bait Fish Nicaragua • \$5.10 • Miscellaneous • Full

MILDER CIGARS

91 Room101 Farce Connecticut Churchill

Dominican Republic • \$11.80 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

H. Upmann Connecticut by Grupo de Maestros ChurchillDominican Republic • \$8.95 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

89 Highclere Castle Churchill
Nicaragua • \$16.00 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

88 Daniel Marshall Black Label Torpedo
Dominican Republic • \$9.95 • Figurado • Mild-Medium

87 Ashton Heritage Puro Sol Churchill

Dominican Republic • \$11.10 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

MEDIUM-BODIED CIGARS

92 H. Upmann No. 2 Cuba • £26.10 • Figurado • Medium-Full

92 La Antiguedad Toro Gordo
Nicaragua • \$8.80 • Grande • Medium

92 Micallef Gomez Sanchez 1RA Generacion Leyenda No. 1 Nicaragua • \$14.00 • Figurado • Medium-Full

92 Padilla Vintage Reserve Churchill
Honduras • \$9.60 • Churchill • Medium

92 San Lotano Requiem Maduro Toro
Nicaragua • \$8.00 • Corona Gorda• Medium-Full

STRONGER SMOKES

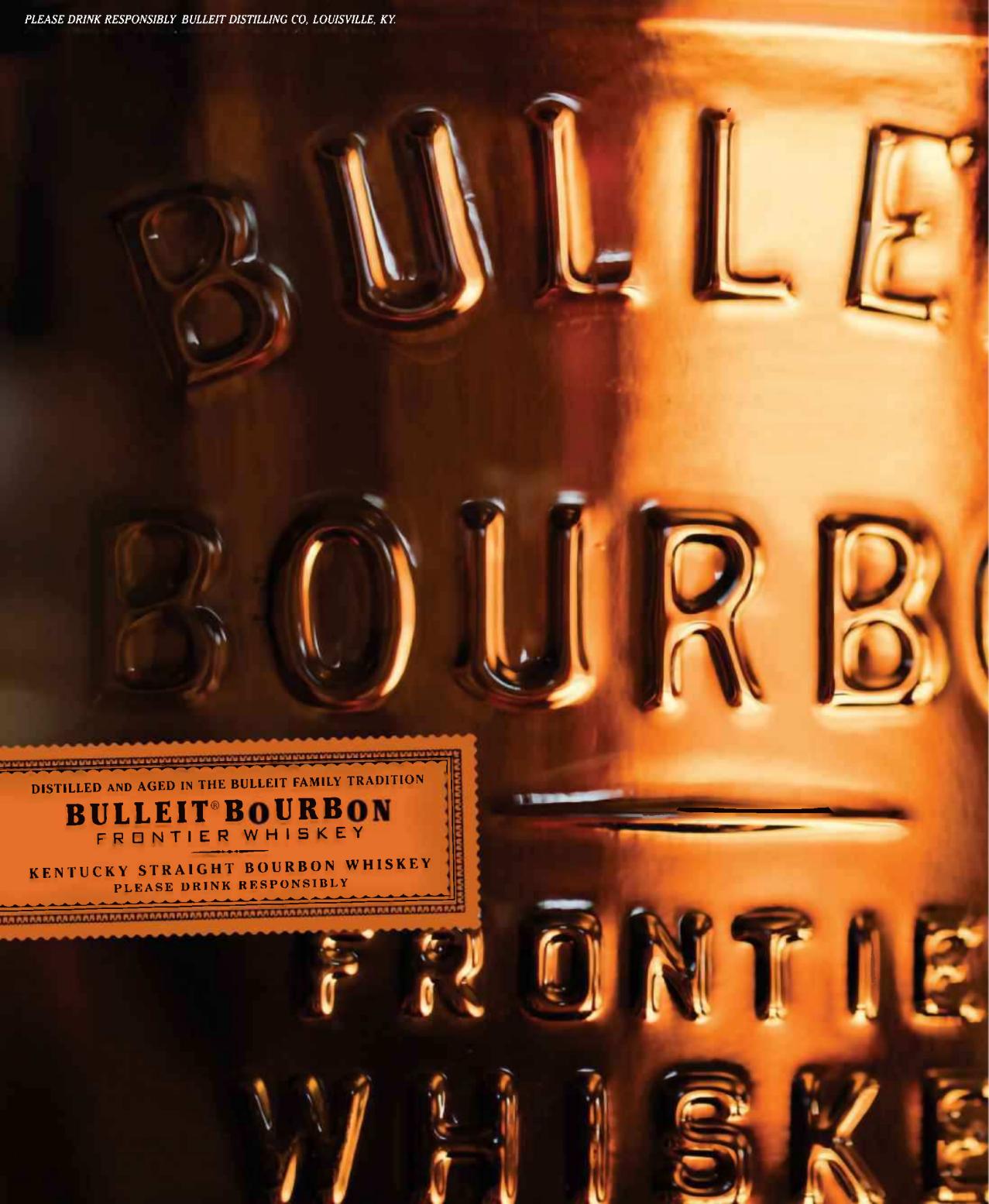
91 Alec Bradley Fine & Rare JRS 10=(86) Gran Toro
Honduras • \$21.90 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full

91 La Aurora 107 Belicoso
Dominican Republic • \$9.24 • Figurado • Medium-Full

Serino Taíno Toro
Nicaragua • \$9.00 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full

90 Joya Silver Robusto Nicaragua • \$7.10 • Robusto • Full

89 Last Call Maduro by AJ Fernandez Corticas Nicaragua • \$6.00 • Miscellaneous • Full







96 BOLIVAR BELICOSO FINO (1996)

A beautiful light wrapper invites you to light up this figurado, which has a perfect draw and burn. The initial white pepper note gives way to a creamy coffee flavor in the mid-palate, and it finishes with a light earthy note. The finish builds in intensity as the cigar warms up. This cigar is smoking wonderfully now, but has a lot of life remaining. —Gordon Mott



96 HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 2 (1994)

I lit this gorgeous, chocolate-colored robusto at a smoky lunch in Havana. From the first puff it was filled with flavors of crushed coffee bean, earth and Valrhona chocolate. The draw was perfect, the burn even despite a fan blowing away the humid Cuban air. A brilliant smoke that is filled with life.

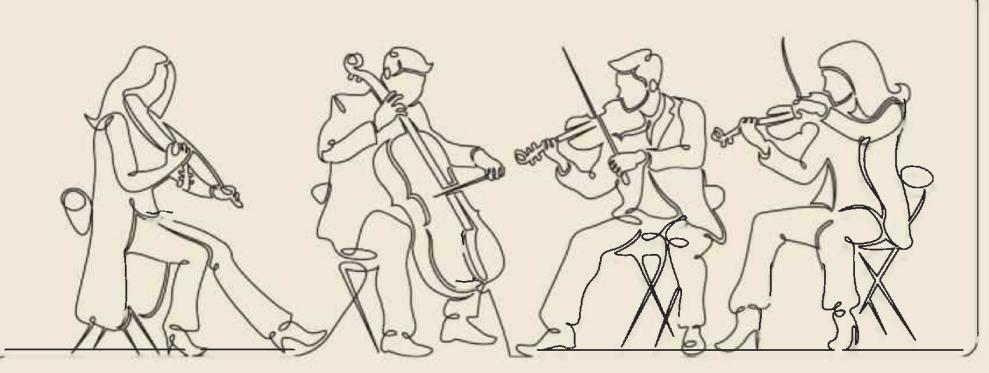
—David Savona



94 COHIBA LANCERO (1991)

Beware Cohibas with this type of cigar band—unless you are certain they are vintage, and from a trusted source. This old, skinny smoke is remarkably vibrant for its age. The draw, sometimes a problem with this vitola, is flawless. It has a lightly minty quality, with pleasant earthy notes, toasted almond and a hint of baking spices. —David Savona

QUARTET OF EXCELLENCE



Aging Room Quattro

Rafael Nodal is more than a cigar maker. He's the inspired composer of the Aging Room Quattro Series, a series of four boutique cigars for the sophisticated palate of an aficionado. Unique in flavor and rich in aroma, these cigars are born from the best tobaccos and aged under the expertise of one of the great names in cigar making.

Follow the music at:

@ @agingroomcigars

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Tobacco Use Increases The Risk Of Infertility, Stillbirth And Low Birth Weight.



'aficionado's

BIG SMOKE LAS VEGAS

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2019 | THE MIRAGE | LAS VEGAS TICKETS ON SALE APRIL 1, 2019



BUY TICKETS NOW AT BIGSMOKELASVEGAS.COM



A detailed analysis of the cigars we rated last year BY DAVID CLOUGH

he phone rings in CIGAR AFICIONADO'S New York office.
An editor picks it up. It's one of our readers with a question—well, a few questions, really. The caller wants to know:

"Which country makes the best cigars?"

"What size smokes better, a Churchill or a corona?"

"Are higher-priced cigars worth the extra money?"

We get the same questions in e-mails, too, and on our social media channels. Everybody wants to smoke the best cigars—we like to provide our readers with information and meaningful data to help them do so. One way we accomplish this is with our cigar ratings.

CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine and its sister publication *Cigar Insider* rates hundreds of cigars each year in blind taste tests.

These ratings keep cigar connoisseurs informed of what's smoking well, and help consumers make better purchasing decisions at the cigar store. Collectively, a year's worth of cigar ratings provides valuable insight into the cigar market as a whole. It gives us, and our readers, a good idea of what cigars truly are smoking best at this particular time.

We reviewed 665 different cigars last year. These smokes came from every major cigarmaking country in all manner of shapes and sizes, presented to our tasting panel without any identifying bands. A tasting coordinator—who is not part of the tasting panel—strips the cigars of their bands and applies a generic white label with a numeric code to each cigar, so the members of the panel do not know the true identity of the cigars in the test.

Only the coordinator knows the code.

This is the vital part of the blind tasting process, a procedure that removes any prejudice or brand familiarity a taster might have with a particular cigar. A cigar with a numeric code is judged solely on its merits: its appearance, how it smokes and most of all the quality of its tobacco.

By looking at a year's worth of blind ratings together, we can rank the highest-scoring cigars of the year, determine the topscoring cigar shapes and sizes and focus on what countries are producing the highest-rated smokes.

It's important to note that of the 665 cigars we rated last year, 241 scored 90 points or higher. That's about 36 percent, which speaks to the high quality of handrolled cigars currently available on the market. It's a good time to be a premium cigar smoker, and this level of quality has remained consistent over the last few years: in 2017, 36 percent of cigars rated by our publications scored 90 points or higher. The year prior, 39 percent reached 90 points

or above. Today's consumer has high standards for their smokes, and they expect their cigars to exhibit a substantial degree of character and complexity. The market has responded to these demands with an exceptional amount of quality cigars.

Of the 241 cigars that scored 90 points or higher last year, 75 of them earned at least 92 points. From this elite subset, there were 25 cigars that scored 93 points or higher—not to be confused with the entries on our Top 25 Cigars of the Year list. Top 25 is a separate blind taste test, where the highest-scoring cigars of the year are pitted against one another. The winning cigars that emerge from the special bracket are deemed the Top 25 Cigars of the Year. If you look closely at the table below, you'll notice many of the cigars that eventually made it onto the Top 25 started out here.

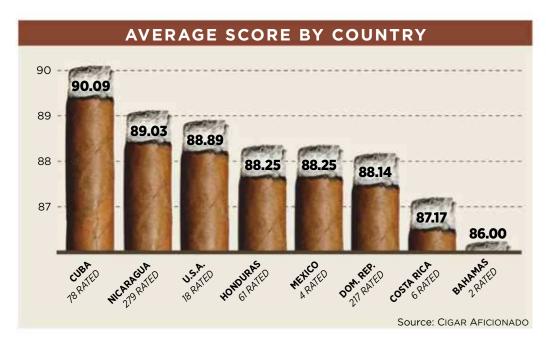
Let's take a closer look at the high scores on this table. Last year, there were only four cigars that scored 94 points of higher. Two of them were rolled in Nicaragua and two of them were made in Cuba. One of the 94s was the Warped Serie Gran Reserva 1988 Robusto. The cigar was blended by Kyle Gellis, owner of Warped Cigars, who contracted the Aganorsa Leaf factory in Estelí, Nicaragua to create the cigar for him. The H. Upmann Sir Winston also scored 94 points. It's a stately-looking Cuban cigar that's named after Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and it went on to take the No. 5 spot on CIGAR AFICIONADO'S Top 25 Cigars of 2018. The Partagás Corona Junior (Tubo) earned 94 points as well—it's a slim Cuban petit corona that's loaded with notes of leather, dried fruit and nougat.

95	Flor de las Antillas Belicoso	Nicaragua
94	H. Upmann Sir Winston	Cuba
94	Partagás Corona Junior (Tubo)	Cuba
94	Warped Serie Gran Reserva 1988 Robusto	Nicaragua
93	7-20-4 Lancero	Honduras
93	Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí Torpedo	Nicaragua
93	Casa Cuba Doble Tres	Dominican Republic
93	Charter Oak CT Shade Rothschild	Nicaragua
93	Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo)	Cuba
93	E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic	Dominican Republic
93	H. Upmann Connossieur B	Cuba
93	Herrera Esteli Miami Toro Especial	U.S.A.
93	Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure Especial	Cuba
93	JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano	Nicaragua
93	La Colmena Amado No. 44	U.S.A.
93	Last Call by AJ Fernandez Chiquitas	Nicaragua
93	Montecristo Nicaragua Series Robusto	Nicaragua
93	My Father La Opulencia Toro	Nicaragua
93	Padrón Family Reserve No. 44 Natural	Nicaragua
93	Partagás Serie P No. 2 (Tubo)	Cuba
93	Punch After Dinner	Honduras
93	Punch Petit Coronation (Tubo)	Cuba
93	The Wise Man Maduro Robusto	Nicaragua
93	Vegas Cubanas Generosos	Nicaragua
93	Vegas Robaina Famoso	Cuba
		Source: CIGAR AFICIONADO

TOP SCORES OF 2018

There was only one cigar that scored higher than these three 94-pointers, taking the crown as highest scoring cigar of the year in a non-Top 25 taste test. The champion smoke was the Flor de las Antillas Belicoso, which earned 95 points—a classic rating on our 100-point scale. This attractive figurado impressed our panel with sophisticated notes of leather, marzipan and white chocolate before a toasty finish. The cigar is a puro, crafted only with Nicaraguan tobaccos, rolled at the My Father Cigars Factory in Estelí, Nicaragua.

Cigars that scored 92 points or higher last year came from all four major cigar-producing countries—Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Honduras—but it's clear the top scores were dominated predominantly by Nicaraguan-made cigars. Nicaragua has become one of the largest producers of handrolled cigars for the United States market, surpassing the Dominican Republic in premium cigar exports, according to the Cigar Association of America. And while the sheer quantity of Nicaraguan cigars on the market is immense, the quality has remained very high. Last year, we





rated 279 cigars from Nicaragua. The average score of a Nicaraguan cigar was 89.03 points—one of the highest averages, second only to Cuban-made cigars. Nevertheless, Nicaragua is the only country that can boast over 100 ratings that were 90 points or higher last year.

Of the 279 Nicaraguan cigars we reviewed, a whopping 111 earned 90 points or higher. That's nearly 40 percent. And if we take a look at the 11 Nicaraguan cigars that scored 93 points or higher, we can see that six of them went on to earn a spot on the Top 25. These include the My Father La Opulencia Toro, which took the No. 2 spot; The Wise Man Maduro Robusto (No. 3); the Padrón Family Reserve No. 44 (No. 4); the JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano (No. 7); the Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí Torpedo (No. 9); and the Montecristo Nicaragua Series Robusto, which landed the No. 10 position. The results are clear: Good things are coming out of Nicaragua.

Cuba also had a tremendous showing last year. We rated 78 Cuban cigars—and the average rating was 90.09—the highest of any cigar-making country. Of these 78 cigars, 50 scored 90 points or higher. That's an impressive 64 percent, which demonstrates that Cuban cigars are smoking exceptionally well right now. Along with the 94-point Sir Winston and the Partagás Corona Junior there were five Cuban 93-pointers last year: Vegas Robaina Famoso, Punch Petit Coronation (Tubo), Partagás Serie P No. 2 (Tubo), the H. Upmann Connossieur B and Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo). The Siglo VI ended up as No. 19 on the Top 25 list.

The Dominican Republic deserves high praise as well. It's the second-largest exporter of premium, handrolled cigars to the U.S., and boasts its own considerable collection of high-scoring smokes. Last year, we rated 217 cigars from the Dominican Republic. The average rating of a Dominican-made cigar was 88.14. There were 56 Dominican cigars that earned 90 points or higher, roughly 26 percent of all Dominican cigars rated in 2018. Cigars leading the category include the Casa Cuba Doble Tres, a 93-pointer blended by the late Carlos Fuente Sr. before his passing in 2016. The Doble Tres is an elegant corona vitola rolled with an Ecuadoran Habano cover leaf.

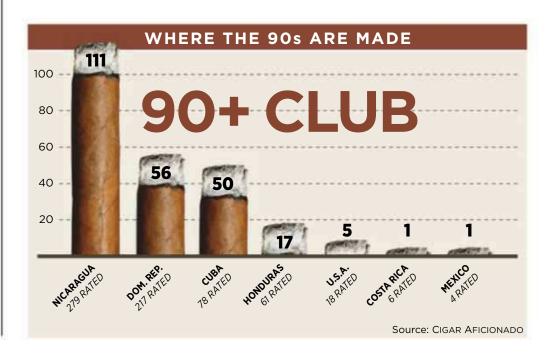
Of course, there's also the E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic, blended by cigarmaker Ernesto Perez-Carrillo. Rolled in the Dominican Republic at Perez-Carrillo's Tabacalera La Alianza factory, Encore is the company's first cigar rolled only with Nicaraguan tobacco. It went on to take CIGAR AFICIONADO'S highest accolade,

the Cigar of the Year for 2018.

Honduras, often overshadowed by other cigarmaking countries, had its fair share of 90 pointers. Out of the 61 cigars we rated from Honduras, 17 cigars earned 90 points or higher, and the average score for cigars hailing from Honduras was 88.25. The country showcased its cigar rolling artistry with the 7-20-4 Lancero, created by cigarmaker Kurt Kendall, whose 7-20-4 brand is named after a long defunct New Hampshire–based cigar company from 1874. The Lancero, which scored 93 points, is rolled with a dark, Brazilian Mata Fina wrapper leaf and topped with a stubby pigtail cap. Honduras also brought us Punch After Dinner, a Churchill-sized cigar that scored 93 points and went on to secure the No. 12 position on our Top 25. Owned by General Cigar Co., Punch After Dinner is draped in a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper and delivers dense, chewy smoke that's earthy and sweet.

Very few premium cigar brands are still rolled in the United States. Most handrolled cigars are produced overseas, where labor costs are cheaper. We rated only 18 cigars from the United States last year. Of that total, five scored 90 points or higher. The average score of a U.S.-made cigar was 88.89. Though our sample size was quite small, there's still a case to be made that cigars rolled in the U.S. are of considerable quality. Take the La Colmena Amado No. 44, made by Warped Cigars and the Herrera Esteli Miami Toro Especial, by Drew Estate, for example. Both scored 93 points. The two brands are rolled at the El Titan de Bronze factory in Miami, Florida.

Cigars from our tastings also came from Mexico, the Bahamas and Costa Rica. These countries have very small premium cigar



FIVE TAKEAWAYS BEFORE YOU SHOP

Old Faithful

The next time you light up a cigar, reach for a corona gorda. Not too big, not too small, these sizes (also known as toros) smoke consistently well. They earned an average rating of 89 points.



Performance For A Price

Cuban cigars, though pricey, are top performers. The Havanas we reviewed last year were more expensive on average than cigars from any other country (£23.69 per cigar in the U.K., or about \$31) but they boasted the highest average score by country, with a rating of 90.09 points.

Land Of The 90 Pointers

More than 110 Nicaraguan cigars scored 90 points or higher last year. That's more 90s than the Dominican Republic and Cuba—even when you combine the two. An impressive feat.



All Talk And No Action

They may look big, tough and packed with tobacco—but grandes (fat cigars with ring gauges of 60 or fatter) tend to be mediocre performers. These portly smokes had the lowest average rating of 87.4 points.



Deal Hunter

If you have \$12, you can get one great cigar—but it can also buy you two: The JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano (\$5.98) and the Punch After Dinner (\$5.89). Both cigars earned 93 points and took positions on our Top 25.



operations compared to the rest of the world. We rated less than seven cigars for each of these countries—with sample sizes this small, average scores are statistically insignificant.

Our ratings from last year also show that some cigar sizes smoke better than others. Cigar connoisseurs understand that the size and shape of a cigar can have a drastic effect on how it smokes. The same tobacco blend, rolled into five different cigar sizes, can reveal different flavor nuances and smoking characteristics based on its length and ring gauge proportions.

Of all the cigar sizes we rated last year, corona gordas, also commonly referred to as toros, were among the highest-scoring. Longer than a robusto and thicker than a corona, corona gordas capture an undeniable sweet spot between smaller and larger sizes. We rated 146 corona gordas last year, and the average score was 89.0 points. Churchills and lonsdales also performed well: both sizes tied with corona gordas for the same average. However, we rated far fewer of these cigars—only 95 Churchills, and just 29 lonsdales.

Coronas and figurados scored a bit lower, both sizes earning an average rating of 88.9 points. Coronas are becoming a rather obscure size—we only rated 31 last year, but figurados still enjoy immense popularity thanks to their eye-catching shapes. We define a figurado

as a non-straight-sided cigar. Think belicosos, torpedos, Salomones or trompetas—any cigar with curves or tapers. We call these masterful creations figurados, and we rated 114 last year.

There was another tie, at 88.8 points, between double coronas and miscellaneous. Double coronas are extra-long cigars between 7 1/2 inches and 8 1/2 inches with a ring gauge of 49 or higher. They're a dying size, unfortunately, and rarely found in cigar shops anymore. In today's fast-paced world, most consumers don't have the time to sit and enjoy a cigar that measures longer than a Churchill. On the opposite end of the spectrum we have miscellaneous cigars, which encompass all irregular length cigars that don't fit into one of our traditional size categories—like the Cohiba Medio Siglo, which scored 90 points last year. At 4 inches long by 52 ring gauge, it's too thick to be called a petit corona and a bit too short to fit into our robusto category. We rated 33 miscellaneous cigars last year.

Robustos, panetelas and petit coronas were among the lowest ranking sizes last year, with average scores of 88.7, 88.4 and 88.1, respectively. But none fared worse than grandes—oversized cigars measuring at least 6 inches by 60 ring gauge. These truly immense cigars are oddly popular among consumers, often due to the perception that a thicker cigar gives you more for your money.

However, jumbo-sized smokes might not be all they're chalked up to be. We rated 38 grandes last year, and the average score was 87.4 points. Though frequently cited by retailers and cigarmakers as best-sellers, grandes, on average, were not the most impressive cigars in our blind tastings.

When it comes to purchasing a handrolled smoke, the common wisdom that "there's a cigar for every person at every price point" holds true. Expensive cigars are not necessarily better cigars—you can find high-scoring smokes for less than \$10. Take, for example, the JFR Lunatic Short Robusto Habano—it ended up earning the No. 7 spot on our Top 25 list and retails for \$5.98 (before taxes).

If price is your main concern, Honduran cigars, on average, cost around \$9.72, which is the lowest compared to any other country. Dominican, Nicaraguan and Mexican cigars all fall within the \$10 range, at an average of \$10.50, \$10.61, \$10.75, respectively. Cigars crafted in the United States tend to be a bit more expensive due to labor costs. The average price of a handrolled cigar in the U.S. was \$12.21.

Costa Rica and the Bahamas produce some of the priciest cigars, with averages of \$13.69 and \$24, though these were very small sample sizes—we only rated six cigars from Costa Rica and two cigars from the Bahamas. Cuban cigars were by far the most expensive, with an average price of \$30.95 per cigar (we converted the average price from British sterling pounds to U.S. dollars). We're often asked, "Is it worth it to buy Cuban?" That's for you to decide. But remember, of all our cigar ratings last year, Cubans earned an average score by country of 90.09, higher than any other cigarmaking country.

The data presented here is only meant to guide you. It doesn't seek to change your mind or tell you what to buy. Numbers aside, a great cigar is not defined by its price or the country it's made in—rather, it's the experience you have while smoking it. Try new cigars and smoke what you like. Share them with friends. Those, after all, are the best cigars. �

SREATIPHICES TOUGHTUP



CORONA CIGAR I ORLANDO. FL

Millions of cigars, hundreds of whiskeys and one-of-a-kind experiences!

Enjoy three Orlando locations offering exclusive cigars, authentic Florida Sun Grown tobacco and private barrel whiskeys.

coronacigar.com



Discover rare and exclusive cigars in our bespoke vault. Personalize cigar boxes and accessories, or relax in our luxurious lounge. Davidoff of Geneva since 1911 is your passport to a cigar world above the ordinary. This is quality time, elevated.

Atlanta • Houston • New York • Las Vegas • Tampa

davidoffgeneva.com



NEPTUNE CIGARS | SOUTH FLORIDA

Thousands of cigars and accessories plus a friendly, knowledgeable staff, in multiple locations in beautiful S. Florida: Miami, South Beach and Fort Lauderdale, near S. Florida's best attractions. Come see why we're the premier cigar superstore for aficionados the world over.

neptunecigar.com



SHELLY'S BACK ROOM | WASHINGTON, D.C.

A distinguished assortment of fine cigars and whiskeys, a state-of-the-art continuous fresh -air system, eight HD TVs, complimentary Wi-Fi, a seasonal outdoor café, and lunch, dinner and late-night menus make Shelly's a D.C. legend! Located two blocks from the White House.

shellysbackroom.com





SOHO CIGAR BAR | MANHATTAN, NY

Eat. Drink. Smoke ___ Indoors! Relax and enjoy flights and pairings from our curated selection of 150 world-class whiskeys and premium cigars. Then indulge yourself with any of our artisanal, crafted appetizers. Your table awaits.

sohocigarbar.com

ANNOUNCING CIGAR AFICIONADO'S

BIG SMOKE FLORIDA



SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2019
SEMINOLE HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO | HOLLYWOOD, FL

Enjoy a fantastic night of cigars, drinks, food, gambling & much more!

25+ PREMIUM CIGARS INCLUDED WITH EACH TICKET

Aging Room | Alec Bradley | Archetype by Ventura | Arturo Fuente | Balmoral Añejo XO

CAO | Diamond Crown | E.P. Carrillo | Foundation – Wise Man | H. Upmann | Hamlet Paredes

Illusione Fume d'Amour | Joya de Nicaragua | La Aroma de Cuba | La Flor Dominicana

Micallef | My Father Cigars – El Centurion | My Father Cigars – Vegas Cubanas

Nat Cicco | Nat Sherman | Nub | Oliva | Onyx | Oscar Valladares | Padrón | PDR

Plasencia | Rocky Patel | Tatuaje | Undercrown





Buy Tickets Now at

BigSmokeFlorida.com

VIP TICKETS AVAILABLE

Trinidad's Hot Night in Havana

The 21st Habanos Festival concluded with a 50th anniversary for Trinidad by Gordon mott



The final night of Cuba's Habanos Festival is always an audacious affair, with energetic music and free-flowing cigars.

he hot and humid patio outside the Pabexpo convention hall in Havana was filled with men and women sipping Champagne and puffing away on cigars of every shape and size. Finally, the elegantly dressed crowd of 1,200 began to slowly file inside the building, the walls decorated from floor to ceiling in jet-black with luminescent white columns and signs touting the 50th anniversary of Cuba's Trinidad brand.

Young models in shimmering, floor-length gold dresses passed out the first Trinidad cigar of the night, and guided each guest into the main salon, an area larger than a football field filled with tables from one end to the other. At least one smoker had decided to save the dinner's cigars, and lit a slim, 15-year-old Trinidad Fundadores he had brought in honor of the brand's birthday.

The 21st annual Festival del Habano attracted more than 2,000 people and 200 journalists between February 18 and 23. They sat through lectures and seminars, took trips to Pinar del Río to visit tobacco fields and farms and toured Cuba's cigar factories. They celebrated cigar launches, most notably the Hoyo de Monterrey

Double Corona Gran Reserva Cosecha 2013, and attended a trade show, with cigar accessories, spirits and traditional Cuban items such as guayaberas and antiques. The show also saw the Habanos World Challenge, a "Jeopardy"-style game show, won by the Italian duo, Aurelio Tufano and Giulio Amaturo.

The gala dinner remains the showcase of the entire week, one where retailers, distributors, officials and the top executives of Habanos S.A., the Cuban cigar monopoly, mingle along with cigar fans from around the world. There were dance and musical performances by the Mexican singer Armando Manzanero, a Grammy Award winner, Charles Fox, the American film and television musical score composer and a grand musical finale with the Puerto Rican salsa star, Gilberto Santa Rosa. Three Habanos Man of the Year awards were given out: Gabriel Estrada, from Argentina, for business; Justo Emilio Luis, a tobacco specialist, for production; and Zoe Nocedo, the director of the Museum of Tobacco in Havana, for communication.

The grand finale of the evening was a live auction of seven







The cigar for Trinidad's 50th anniversary is the first figurado ever made for the brand. A stylish Trinidad humidor was sold to Manu Harit (above, in bow tie) for 300,000 euros (\$340,000).

unique custom humidors, which raised 1.5 million euros (\$1.7 million) for the Cuban public health system. The big winner of the evening was Hamad Al-Shamisi from the United Arab Emirates. He purchased the Montecristo humidor, which was shaped like the bow of a sailing ship with a stainless steel and titanium sail emblazoned with the Montecristo logo, for 220,000 euros (\$249,000). The huge piece came with 420 cigars, including the Montecristo 1935 line, the rare Maravillas and the iconic Montecristo No. 2, among others. Al-Shamisi also purchased the Cohiba humidor for 300,000 euros (\$340,000). The striking black box, with bas relief of a native Cuban deity, contained 550 cigars, including the entire Cohiba Behike BHK series, the Talismán Edición Limitada and the newly announced Novedosos. As he walked off the stage after buying the Cohiba box, his second winning bid of the night, he smiled when asked why he bought the humidor. "Because I love it," he said.

Manu Harit from the United Kingdom purchased the Trinidad humidor for 300,000 euros (\$340,000). The unique design will be reproduced in 99 other humidors, each with 50 Trinidad 50 Aniversario cigars. "This is a very special piece, and for me, it is as important as Cohiba. I also think Trinidad is the best cigar," Harit said.

Max Gutmann, who owns the company that imports Cuban cigars to Mexico, bought two humidors, the San Cristobal de la Habana humidor and the one for Romeo y Julieta. The San

Cristobal box, which had 500 cigars, went for 175,000 euros (\$198,000) and the Romeo box, which had 400 cigars, sold for 200,000 euros (\$227,000). A long-time Festival attendee, and a real lover of cigars, Mr. Gutmann now owns nine of the special Festival humidors. "I buy these humidors because it helps the Cuban people and the Cuban public health system," Gutmann said.

Cai Hua of Shanghai, China, bought the H. Upmann humidor, which had a selection of 340 cigars including the Sir Winston, the Magnum series, the Double Coronas and a special Tacos Imperiales. The H. Upmann humidor, which harkened back to the brand's creation by a German Banker, Herman Upmann, relied on a bank vault for its visual inspiration. George Xu, also of Shanghai, won the Hoyo de Monterrey humidor, which came back to the auction floor after failing to meet a minimum price in the first round. Xu paid 160,000 euros (\$181,000) for the humidor, crafted in a cylindrical shape evoking a cigar. Inside were 370 cigars, including the iconic Double Corona.

If the excitement around the auction brings the Festival to a climax, the entire week is really built around the announcements for new cigars in 2019, and new releases at the Festival. Trinidad, a brand released to the general retail market in late 1997 after decades as a special diplomatic gift of the Cuban government, was the marquis cigar for the Festival. Five different sized cigars will be added to the brand, the most unique of which will

be the pyramid sold in the 50th Anniversary Trinidad humidor. San Cristobal de la Habana was also celebrated this year, appropriate given that 2019 marks the 500th anniversary of the founding of Havana in 1519. The San Cristobal de la Habana 1519 will come in 500 humidors, each containing 100 cigars. The other size launched during the Festival is the San Cristobal de la Habana 20 Aniversario, a Casa del Habano exclusive that measures 6 1/3 inches by 52 ring and will come in 20-unit boxes shaped like antique trunks. The other Casa del Habano exclusive is the Cohiba Novedosos (6 by 50), which will ship in uniquely styled boxes of 25.

Hoyo de Monterrey joined the ranks of Gran Reserva cigars, and is the first Gran Reserva in the brand's history. The Double Corona Gran Reserva Cosecha 2013 builds off the brand's most famous cigar. There will be 5,000 numbered boxes of 15 cigars each. The new Punch Short de Punch (5 by 50) is the first 50 ring gauge cigar in the regular-production Punch brand. It will come in wooden boxes of 10.

The Edición Limitadas for 2019 are the Montecristo Supremos (5 by 55); Ramon Allones Allones No. 2, a figurado cigar in the belicoso style measuring 5 1/2 by 52; and the Quai d'Orsay Senadores (6 1/4 by 48), the first time this brand has been made into an Edición Limitada. ❖

For more coverage on the Festival and Cuba's new cigars, visit cigaraficionado.com



Clean Air Defined

Official air purifier of the International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers (IPCPR)



Effective . Quiet . Stylish . Air Purifiers For a free catalog call 888.866.8862 www.rabbitair.com/smoke

moments to remember

Please send all submissions to: CIGAR AFICIONADO/Moments to Remember, Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10019. Or email them to: momentstoremember@mshanken.com. To order additional copies of CIGAR AFICIONADO, call 1-800-344-0763.



Smoking cigars outside Fiola restaurant in Coral Gables, Florida, from left, front: Blake James (the U), Ernesto Perez-Carrillo (EPC Cigar Co.), Jorge Padrón (Padrón Cigars), Marvin R. Shanken (the U) and Manny Diaz (the U). Top row: Jesse Marks (the U), Ed Rabin, Carlos Fuente Jr. (Fuente Cigars) and Gregory Shepherd (the U).



The guests lit Fuente Fuente OpusX cigars to celebrate the wedding of Ryan Giasullo and Katharine LaRosa in Rye, New York. Pictured from left to right, front row: country singer Travis Tritt, groom Ryan Giasullo, father of the bride Bob LaRosa, bride Katie LaRosa and her brother Chris LaRosa.



Adam Berr, Chase Llewellyn, Amy Berr and Doug Berr about to light up some Perdomo Lot 23 and Champagne 10th Anniversary cigars at Chase and Amy's wedding in Virginia Beach at the Break Neck Military Base.



Puffing on some Cuban Romeo y Julieta Short Churchills, Andrew Kahn, Robby Hock, proud father Don Barden and his son Jake Barden celebrate the three young men's graduation from the University of Georgia in style.



Some of the biggest names in the cigar industry attend the ProCigar Festival in Eric Moskowitz (center) of New York celebrates his engagement party with the Dominican Republic. See cigaraficionado.com for Festival coverage.



good friends and fine cigars at Lexington Bar and Books in Manhattan.



Chris Cutlip, Adam Brun, Matt Brun, Fred Cubberly, Tom Eveler, Michael Meyer and Joe Bryers enjoy the warm weather with some cigars out on the deck in Dayton, Ohio.

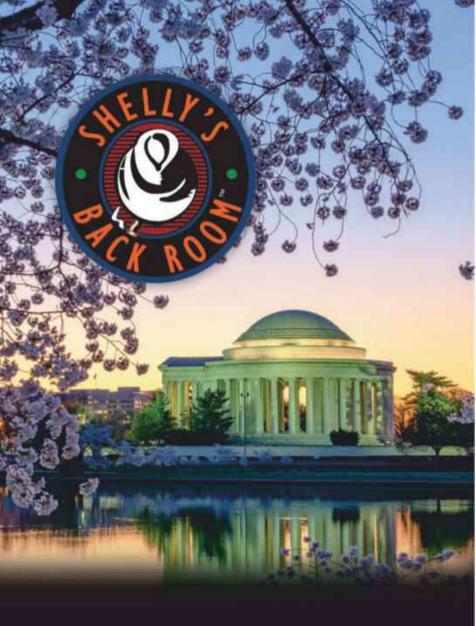


Kevin Melancon, Rick Melancon and assorted family keep themselves warm during the harsh Canadian winter with an assortment of fine smokes.



Joshua Braun, his father and friends gather to celebrate the wedding of Joshua and Karalyn Church with some boutique cigars in Denver, Colorado.





A LEGEND AMONG LANDMARKS

A standard for cigar aficionados for over 20 years, Shelly's Back Room is a comfortable, yet still elegant, retreat in which to enjoy fine cigars and choose from a distinguished assortment of single malt and blended whiskies.

Lunch, dinner and late-night menus offer the perfect complement to your cigar smoking pleasure.

A new, state-of-the-art continuous fresh air system will make your visit to Washington's best cigar tavern even better!

Shelly's Back Room

1331 F. Street NW • Washington, D.C. 202.737.3003 • SHELLYSBACKROOM.COM









Sal Anselmo and Al Smith of Allentown, Pennsylvania, celebrate their 65th birthdays with some Cuban Punch cigars and golf.



Keven Joslin poses with cigarmaker Rocky Patel on the Rocky Patel Yacht Cruise out of Marina del Rey in California.



Mike DelBene and friends light up handmade cigars to pair with fine Tequila for the 20th anniversary of their annual Tequila Night in Girard, Ohio. Cheers to another 20 years!



Mark Jenkins from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hangs out with cigarmaker Jonathan Drew at Drew Estate's Kentucky Barn Smoker.



Friends John Deushane and Bob Barker end the day with couple of cigars after golfing at the Old Course in St Andrews, Scotland.



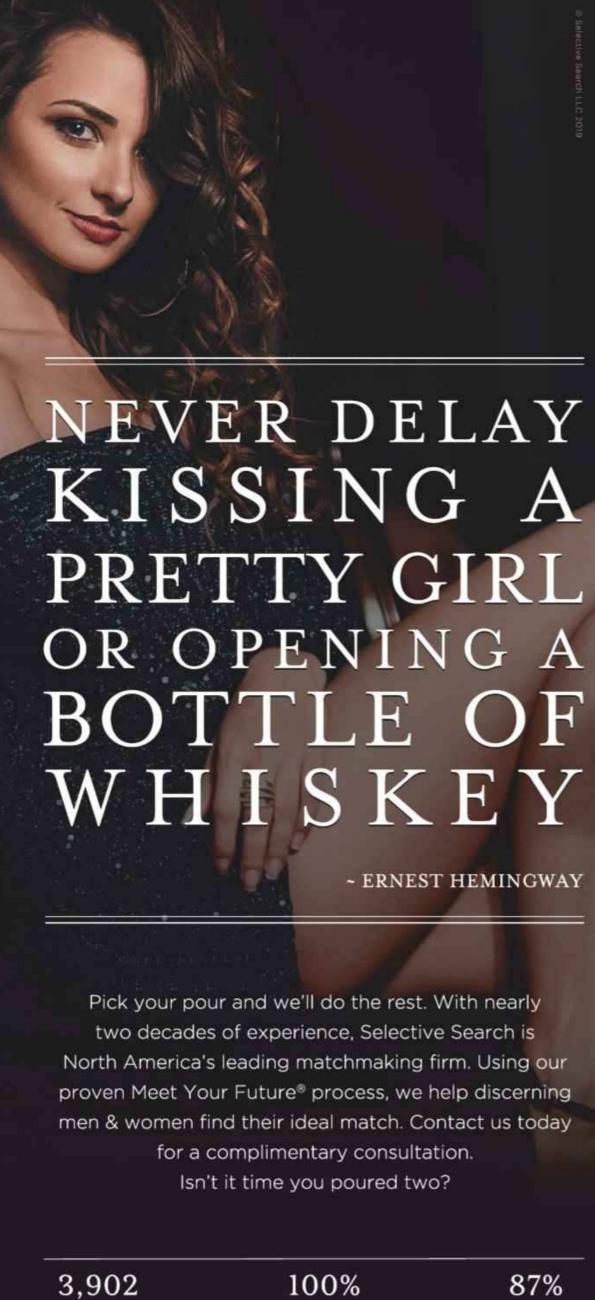
Aleksandar Stipcic pays a friendly visit to famed tobacco grower Hirochi Robaina at the Robaina farm in Pinar del Río, Cuba.



After 45 years of friendship, Paul Campbell and Gary Hancock still find time for golf and cigars at the Garden Valley Resort in Lindale, Texas.



Jason Rosell and Jennifer Schmidt seal their wedding vows with a pair of My Father Flor de las Antillas cigars in Carmel Valley, California.



HAPPY COUPLES

CONFIDENTIAL & OFFLINE

SUCCESS RATE



EXECUTIVE SEARCH MEETS PERSONAL MATCHMAKING

selectivesearch.com 866.592.1200

info@selectivesearch.com



Jud Lind, Ken Peterson and Bill LeRoy from The Founders Group in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, kick back for drinks and smokes at Nick's Cigar and Wine Bar.



Lt. Col. Bill North, USAF, retired, and Brice Sikes light up Rocky Patel and Ashton cigars before the big game in Jacksonville, Florida.



There's no better way to celebrate family than with a good smoke. Steve Bogue (center), flanked by his daughter Rachel and future son-in-law Nate Sax, gathers with other family members to enjoy some fine Cohiba and Montecristo cigars at the Galen Hall Golf Club in Wernersville, Pennsylvania.



After a year's deployment in the Middle East, Lieutenant Colonel Jenni Bouland (right) comes home to Tampa, Florida, and joins best friends Jill Platt and Memi Whitehead for a smoke.



The Yandek cousins pair cigars and cocktails at Davidoff of Geneva in Tampa, Florida. From left: Ryan Williams, John Yandek, Nick Paddy, Randy Yandek, Phillip Yandek and Chase Yandek.



Two couples—Rick and Tammy Matter and Tim and Jean Essinger—celebrate 25 years of marriage with Tim and Debbie Tischendorf at Durty Nelly's on the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas.

Embark On The Hero's Journey.



The Journey's Reward



venturacigar.com #archetypecigars

▲ WARNING: This product can expose you to chemicals including tobacco smoke, which is known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov. Smoking cigars causes lung cancer, heart disease, and emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy.

WARNING: Cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes.



Sopranos Trivia Answer Key

Continued from page 49

1. Silvio Dante and Paulie "Walnuts" Gualtieri

Christopher is killed by Tony. Adriana, who had a very minor role in the pilot, ended up engaged to Christopher, but was found out to be an FBI informant, and is killed by Silvio. Silvio survives, but barely—he gets shot in an attempted assassination in the penultimate episode and ends up in a coma. Out of this group, only Paulie ends up unscathed, and is promoted to the head of the Aprile crew by Tony in the final episode.

2. Joe Gannascoli

In episode 8 of Season 1, Joe Gannascoli plays an innocent bystander named Gino who enters the bakery where Christopher (Michael Imperioli) shoots a clerk in the foot. In Season 2, Gannascoli returns as a new, more important character, Vito Spatafore, who is one of Tony Soprano's henchmen. That character met a most undignified end in Season 6.

3. DiMeo

Dominic DiMeo's run as the head of the crime family bearing his name ended when he was sent to prison. Jackie Aprile took over until his death from cancer. Corrado "Uncle Junior" Soprano is named boss, although his nephew Tony truly runs the show and reaps most of the profits. Tony eventually becomes boss in name as well, and the family is later referred to as the Soprano Crime Family.

4.92

According to the website SopranosFandom, 92 characters met their doom during the six-season series, an average of 15.3 kills per season. They were shot, strangled, beaten, suffocated and stabbed. The website attributes 19 kills (direct and indirect) to Tony Soprano alone, more than any other character.

5. Silvio Dante

The man who becomes consigliere in the Soprano organization doles out solid advice to his boss, but he also has a funny side. He entertains the troops with regular, overacted lines from *The Godfather* series of films. "Just when I thought I was out," he says, his bottom lip reaching out nearly to his nose, "they pull me back in."

6. Tony Sirico

The actor who played Paulie "Walnuts" Gualtiere spent some time on the wrong side of the law before he turned to acting. "I was a pretty tough kid," Sirico told CIGAR AFICIONADO in 2001. According to the Los Angeles Times, he was arrested 28 times, and even shot.

7. Carmela

Despite Tony Soprano's numerous infidelities, dishonesty and sometimes abusive language toward his wife, Carmela was the only one out of the four who didn't try to kill him.

8. Cazzata Malanga!

The line from Uncle Junior is nearly as surprising as his attack on Tony in the opening episode of Season 6. In a (very) loose and cleaned up translation from Italian, *cazzata* means "messed up." Junior is descending into dementia, and mistakes his nephew for his old enemy, Genaro "Little Pussy" Malanga, who died many years ago.

9. Centanni's Meat Market

The famous Soprano hangout was called Centanni's in the pilot episode but changed to Satriale's when the filming crew found a new location that made it easier to shoot the subsequent episodes. As is explained in Season 3, "Johnny Boy" Soprano took over the shop after owner Francis Satriale couldn't pay his gambling debt. It later became a common meeting place for Tony Soprano's crew.

10. 27

Some of them had bigger roles in *Goodfellas* while others had more of the spotlight in "The Sopranos," but nearly 30 actors in Scorcese's famous gangster film went on to be in the HBO series, including Tony Sirico, who played Tony Stacks in *Goodfellas*; Michael Imperioli, who portrayed the ill-fated Spider; and Lorraine Bracco, who had the major role of Karen Hill, wife of protagonist Henry Hill.

11. "Comendatori," Season 2

When Tony and his crew go to Italy, David Chase has a nonspeaking role as a local sitting outside a café in Naples.

12. "Don't Stop Believin'"

Released in 1981, this song was a major hit for the band Journey, and it surged back into popularity after making a memorable appearance at the conclusion of the final episode of "The Sopranos." Only part of the song is played, however, as it ends abruptly in mid-chorus when the screen cuts to black, leaving the ultimate fate of one of the most popular fictional gangsters of all time unknown. Is Tony Soprano murdered in the diner? Or is it just another night in Jersey?



Ed Curley and John Garey from Dover, Delaware, sit back and enjoy some Cuban cigars at El Floridita, the Havana bar Ernest Hemingway made famous.



With lit cigars and mojitos in hand, Robert Gibson of Asheville, North Carolina, and Tim Carruth of Pasadena, California, meet up in Cuba for Robert's 60th birthday.



Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Kilmartin with colleagues Ed Cabral, Mark Best man Travis Spence with his brother Derek, who's smoking a vintage McKitchen and John Gagnon smoke cigars during a relaxing round of golf.



Cohiba Lancero on his wedding day in Nantucket, Massachusetts.



Karl and Karissa Swinford of Katy, Texas, celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary in Florence, Italy, with a Cuban Romeo y Julieta No. 1.



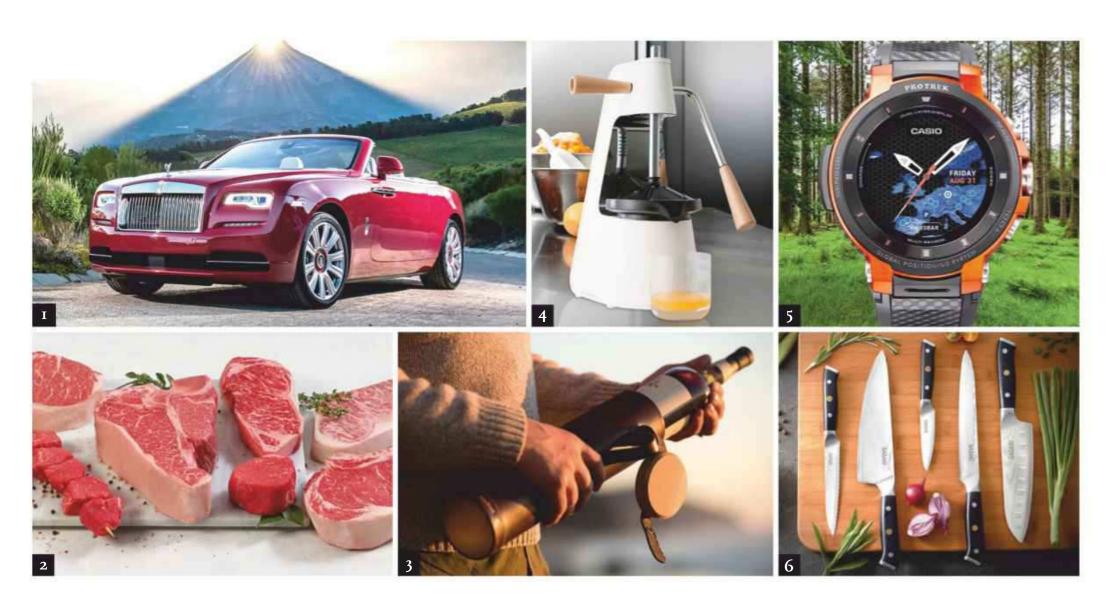
Manuel and Alina Nino enjoy a smoke and an evening together at the Casa de Montecristo cigar bar in Miami.

CIGAR AFICIONADO (ISSN #1063-7885) is published bimonthly by M. Shanken Communications, Inc., Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019. (212) 684-4224. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Address changes and subscription inquiries: CIGAR AFICIONADO, P.O. Box 37367 Boone, IA 50037-0367; call 1-800-365-4929; or email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com. Subscription rates: United States, \$24.95 per year; Canada, \$38.00 per year; all other foreign, \$56.00. Subscriptions are payable in U.S. funds. TO ORDER A NEW SUBSCRIPTION, call 1-800-792-2442, email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, or write to aforementioned Boone address. To order back issues, call 1-800-761-4099. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned, and no responsibility can be assumed for such material. All "Letters to the Editor" should be sent to the editor at the aforementioned New York address. All rights

in letters sent to CIGAR AFICIONADO will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and subject to CIGAR AFICIONADO's unrestricted right to edit. CIGAR AFICIONADO® is a registered trademark of M. Shanken Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted or reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the publisher. Copyright © 2019, M. Shanken Communications, Inc. To sell CIGAR AFICIONADO call: 1-800-344-0763.



made for you



In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

CURATED TRAVEL: NIQUESA

Your plane lands on an icy runway in Antarctica, and you get the highly coveted, commemorative South Pole stamp on your passport before going off to visit penguin colonies. What could be cooler than that? Well, the same travel provider, London's Niquesa, can custom-build many more vacations to your specifications, and offers a slew of other options. One will have you driving a Rolls-Royce through Scotland's highlands, while stopping for trout fishing, golf and Dalmore Scotch. Or you can plan your own. Trips include 24/7 support from a dedicated personal assistant. *niquesatravel.com*

2 STAY AT HOME STEAKS—NEW YORK PRIME BEEF

The first rule of cooking a great steak at home is simple: buy quality meat. Based out of the Bronx, New York, Prime Beef ships premium, aged steaks (at least 28 days) directly to your home so you don't need to haggle with a butcher. New York Prime Beef specializes in A5 Kobe from Japan, American wagyu from the Pacific Northwest, cowboy tomahawks, porterhouses, T-bones and many other cuts. The company will even fulfill custom "aged to order" requests. newyorkprimebeef.com

3 WHISKEY ON THE GO—WALNUT STUDIOLO

A dram at home is good, but what do you do if you wish to bring that special spirit with you? In comes Walnut's leather whiskey case (\$145). Each case is made by hand in Portland, Oregon, using U.S.-sourced vegetable-tanned hides. For an extra \$18, it can be monogrammed. The cedarwood ends and the tight-snapping top protects your precious cargo from breakage, while the leather carry strap makes it easier to transport your bottle to a party, picnic, beach or wherever you desire. walnutstudiolo.com

4 POUR ON THE JUICE—CHEF'N FRESHFORCE CITRUS PRESS

A flood of great drinks—Whiskey Sours, Daiquiris, Gin Fizzes, Screwdrivers and Salty Dogs—tap citrus fruit for part of their super power. Problem is you end up spending the entire cocktail party trying to squeeze enough of the obligatory fresh juice to keep up with demand. The sturdy and simple Fresh-Force Tabletop Citrus Press (\$79.95) uses lever action to quickly express juice in one movement without crushing the bitter pith. Disassembly is simple, making cleanup a snap. *chefn.com*

NATURE'S SMARTWATCH—CASIO

Outdoor enthusiasts looking to enhance their adventures can carry a slew of options on their wrists with Casio's new GPS-enabled WSD-F30 smartwatch (\$550). Built on Google's Wear OS platform, the F30 offers loads of useful apps for activities that include golf (distance details for more than 41,000 courses), fishing (display and save fishing spots), hiking (trail routes) and many more. The watch's EXTEND mode means it can work offline for up to three days on a single charge, useful when the call of the wild takes you far away from an electrical outlet. wsd.casio.com

6 HIGH-GRADE BLADES—SASAKI

"Mindful cooking" is the current rage. But how do you meditate while you're slicing onions? If you're working with Sasaki cutlery, you could set your mind on the 60-day process steeped in Japanese tradition that creates each knife. Or the 67 layers of Damascus stainless steel and a Japanese AUS-10 super steel core heated to 1,000° C that make up the blade. Or its honing to a 15° angle on a sand wheel. But be mindful not to cut yourself. Available in chef, santoku and paring sizes. sasakiknives.com

BORN IN LOS ALTOS DE JALISCO MANNY HINOJOSA Tequila Expert ARTURO GUTIÉRREZ Cantinero, Bar Imperial TEQUILA ADD PC JALAUJJILU

LOS CAZADORES TOMAN CON RESPONSABILIDAD. DRINK RESPONSIBLY. ©2019. CAZADORES, THEIR TRADE DRESSES AND THE DEER LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS. IMPORTED BY TEQUILA CAZADORES U.S.A., SEAL BEACH, CA. TEQUILAS EACH – 40% ALC. BY VOL.

IOO% AGAVE





MANERO FLYBACK
AUTOMATIC | 18 K ROSE GOLD



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In the matter of Trademark Registration No. 1 For the mark COHIBA Date registered: February 17, 1981	147309
AND	
In the matter of the Trademark Registration No. For the mark COHIBA Date registered: June 6, 1995	
EMPRESA CUBANA DEL TABACO, CUBATABACO,	
Petitione	r, : Cancellation No. 92025859
v.	:
GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC., Respond	ent.

EXHIBIT 27

TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE

cigar Cigar

THE GOOD LIFE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

www.cigaraficionado.com

PEBBLE BEACH A LEGEND TURNS 100

SOARING DEMAND FOR COLLECTIBLE BOURBON

PAUL GIAMATTI STARS IN BILLIONS

PARTY AT THE HARD ROCK

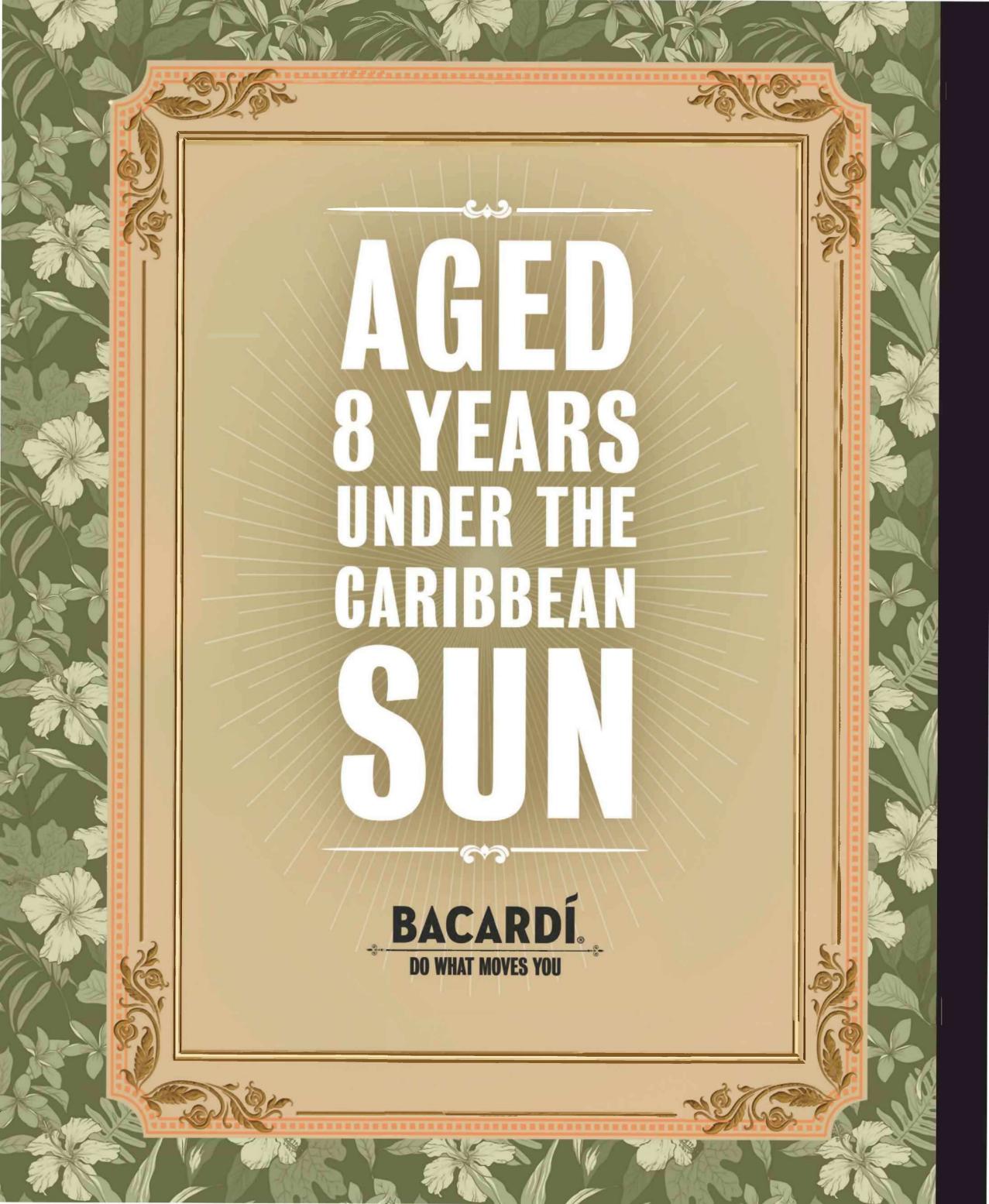


80 REVIEWS

CIGAR BUYING GUIDE

BEST BUYS



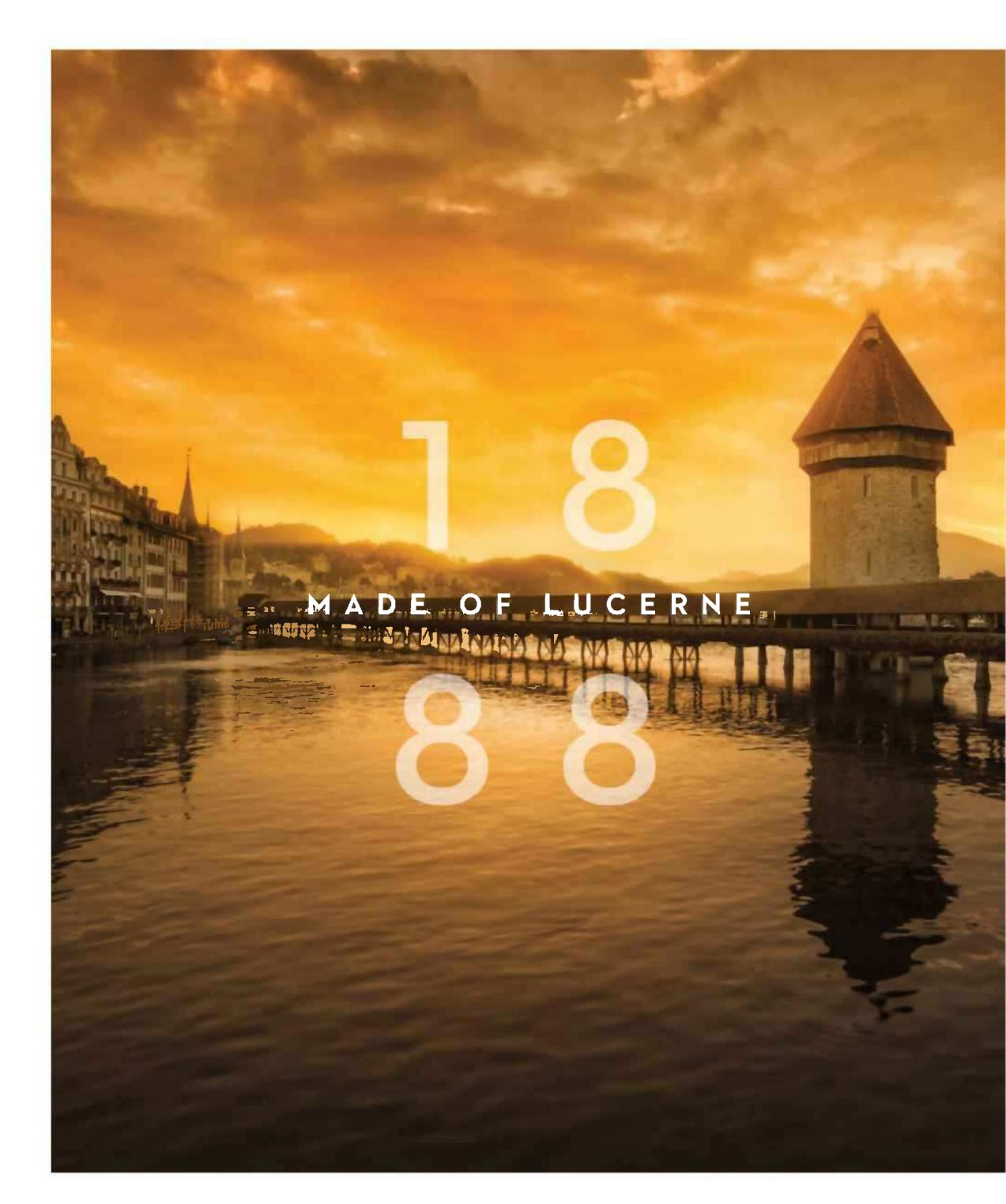
















LUCERNE 1888



MANERO FLYBACK
AUTOMATIC | STAINLESS STEEL





With knowledge



comes enjoyment.

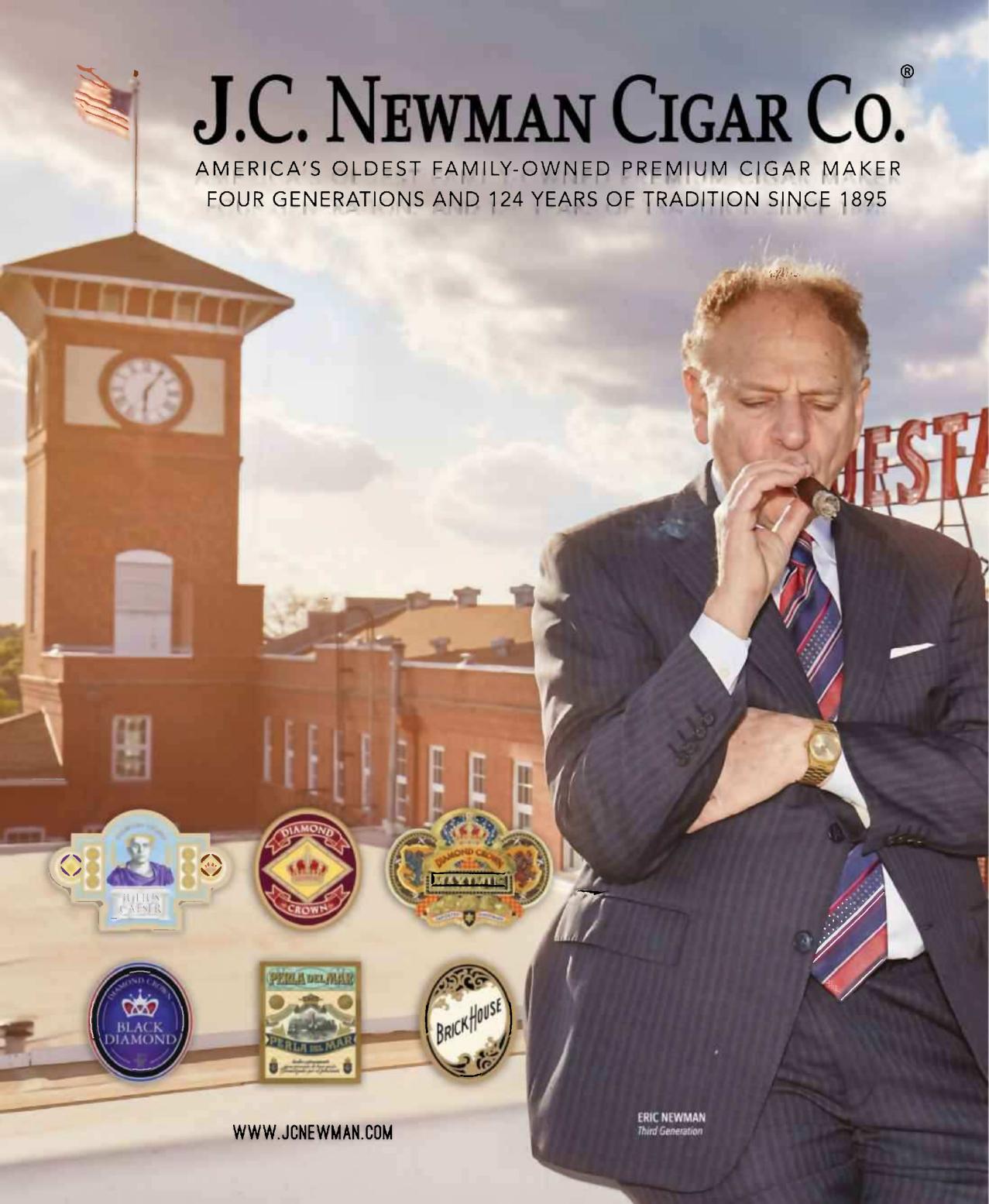


ancionado

Magazines for people who are passionate.

TO SUBSCRIBE: goodlife.mshanken.com

PUBLICATIONS OF M. SHANKEN COMMUNICATIONS, INC.







TOP: EVAN SCHILLER; CENTER: JEFF HARRIS; ON THE COVER: SHIRT BY BRIONI, VEST AND BLAZER BY KIRED

contents

may/june 2019

up front

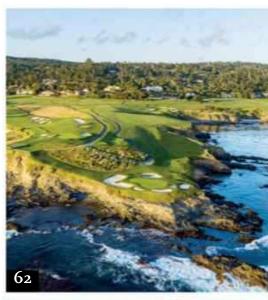
- 16 CIGAR HIGHLIGHTS
- IO EDITORS' NOTE
- letters 2I OUT OF THE HUMIDOR
 - 26 ELS FOR AUTISM

 The CIGAR AFICIONADO-sponsored charity golf tournament added another \$1 million to the cause.
- the best 29 THE GOOD LIFE GUIDE
 - 30 PLACES A Swiss cigar haven fit for three kings.
 - 33 STYLE Stefano Ricci's blue heaven for spring and summer.
 - 36 WHEELS BMW fills the SUV gap in the 7-series.
 - TIME The salmon watch comes home to spawn.
 - **4I** CIGARS An ashtray with the Midas touch.
 - **DRINK** An agave shortage isn't keeping Tequila down.
 - 45 SPORT Today's golf balls play longer, faster and truer.
 - **46 FUN** A museum to thrill your inner mobster.

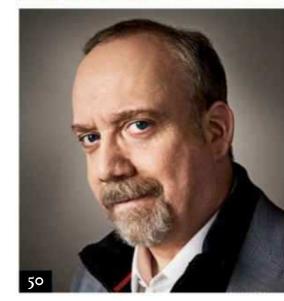
features

- COVER 50 PAUL GIAMATTI: MAN OF MYRIAD ROLES
 There is seemingly no role Paul Giamatti can't tackle,
 and now he returns to TV as the complicated lawman
 Chuck Rhoades Jr. in Showtime's "Billions."
 - golf 62 A CENTURY OF PEBBLE BEACH

 The famed California seaside golf course celebrates its 100th birthday by hosting the U.S. Open. In case you didn't make the cut, we tell you how to play the course.
- spirits 74 COLLECTIBLE BOURBON
 Sudden interest in pre-Prohibition whiskey is boosting
 Bourbon on the auction market. But the current market
 also has finds that will develop a history of their own.







ON THE COVER
Paul Giamatti, the man of a billion faces. Photographed exclusively for CIGAR AFICIONADO by David Needleman



Baseball isn't just a national pastime in the Dominican Republic, it's a way of life starting at childhood. That 12-month-a-year obsession with the game has produced more major leaguers than any

country outside of the United States.

cigars

tasting 90 We rate 80 cigars in six sizes: Churchills (90), coronas (92), corona gordas (94), figurados (96), lonsdales (98) and robustos (100). Find expert shopping advice in our Buying Guide (102) and see how well cigars age in Connoisseur's Corner (104).

industry 106

A CIGAR FACTORY TURNS FIFTY

Tabacalera de Garcia, the maker of such storied cigars as Montecristo, Romeo y

Juileta and H. Upmann, may be middle-aged, but it makes almost a third of the handmade cigars shipped every year to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic.

big smoke II2 PARTY AT THE HARD ROCK
The Big Smoke, CIGAR AFICIONADO'S
cigar and drink celebration, returned
to Florida this year with a fete that
introduced readers to cigar rock stars at the
Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.

Education is the theme, but love of tobacco and rum is the draw, when Habanos S.A. takes its show on the road to teach the world about Cuba's best-known exports.

128

Photos from our readers as they enjoy themselves and their cigars.

MADE FOR YOU
Humidors custom-made for the high seas;
baseball-inspired belts made to order; a pizza
oven that makes heat at home; the personal
hearing device that separates you from the
crowd; putting pizazz in your shoelaces;
and a tea collection with a manly side.







highlights.

Fans of corona gordas will love that nine cigars in the category scored 90 points or higher, including three that tied for a top score of 93 points. High scores abounded, especially with cigars rolled in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, but none were quite as high as the Room101 Farce It Is A Lonsdale, which scored 94 points.



TOP LONSDALE

ROOM101 FARCE IT IS A LONSDALE

This smoke with a coy name is rolled with tobaccos from five different countries, including Pennsylvania broadleaf in the filler.

DOM. REP.

94



TOP CORONA GORDA

PUNCH DIABLO SCAMP

Billed as the strongest non-Cuban Punch, this corona gorda (also known as a toro) tied with the Aladino Toro and Gran Habano La Conquista Gran Robusto to lead the category.

NICARAGUA

93



TOP CORONA

JOYA SILVER CORONA

This newer Joya tied with another Nicaraguan smoke, Warped Cigars' La Relatos The First, for best score in the corona category.

NICARAGUA

92



TOP ROBUSTO

AGING ROOM QUATTRO NICARAGUA ESPRESSIVO

The Espressivo is made by A.J. Fernandez with Nicaraguan tobacco. It tied with Cuba's Partagás Serie D No. 4 for top robusto.

NICARAGUA

92



TOP CHURCHILL

LA FLOR DOMINICANA 1994 MAMBO

Created to commemorate the 20th anniversary of La Flor Dominicana, the Mambo wears an alluring Mexican San Andrés wrapper.

DOM. REP.

91



TOP FIGURADO

ARTURO FUENTE DON CARLOS NO. 2

This portly pyramid, which measures 55 ring gauge, tied with Cuba's Montecristo Petit No. 2 for the top spot in this group.

DOM. REP.

91



BEST BUY

PADRÓN AMBASSADOR MADURO

It's long, it's slender and it sells for only \$5.90. According to Padrón, the tobacco in the Ambassador has been aged a minimum of two and a half years.

NICARAGUA

90





A world's first: One-Touch Americano for light, aromatic, long coffees

The Z8 uses a special preparation method that combines the coffee with hot water during the extraction process, resulting in full-bodied, deliciously light specialties. Parallel preparation of coffee and milk guarantee the perfect Caffè latte result. The 4.3" high-resolution touchscreen color display with a sophisticated operating concept accounts for intuitive navigation. The Z8 can even be operated from a smartphone or tablet.

Coffee pleasure – freshly ground, not capsuled.









E8



8X

GIGA 6

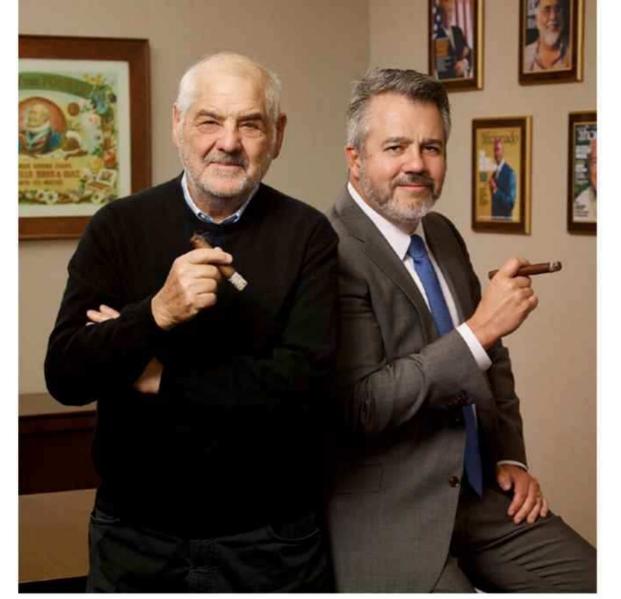
D6



We offer a full range of JURA automatic coffee machines from \$799 to \$8,999. For expert advice call: 800-709-8210







The Day Congress Listened to Cigarmakers

n April 5, members of the United States Congress came to Ybor City, Florida, to hear the plight of the premium cigar industry. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, led a field hearing called "Keeping Small, Premium Cigar Businesses Rolling." Joining him were Reps. Kathy Castor (D-FL-14) and Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12).

It was the first time Congress had held a hearing dedicated to handmade, premium cigars. It was about time.

Congress needs to take action and finally realize the terrible card that has been dealt to the handmade cigar industry. When the Obama administration put the U.S. tobacco industry under the control of the Food and Drug Administration in 2009, it led to overarching and unnecessary government oversight of the handmade cigar industry. This is a small business segment. In a good year, some 300 million or so handmade cigars are sold, compared with around 13 billion mass-market smokes. Handmade cigars have no reason to be overseen by the FDA, a government agency that has far more important things to focus on.

Under FDA guidelines, cigar companies are forced to operate as if they were wearing shackles. Creating new products? Difficult and expensive. Innovation? Next to impossible. And forget it if you're an entrepreneur who wishes to create a new brand. Government fees alone could cost you an estimated quartermillion dollars before you sold your first \$10 cigar.

The intent of all these new rules was to keep tobacco out of the hands of children. While we firmly believe that minors should not be allowed to smoke or purchase cigars, we also know that the handmade cigar industry needs no policing to achieve

editors' note

that goal. Children are already discouraged from hand-made cigars by their price and their lack of availability, as most are sold in brick-and-mortar shops where children are not welcome. Even the data from the FDA itself confirms this, as a 2017 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that very few children in America have ever smoked a premium cigar.

When uninformed politicians target cigarette smoking with scattershot legislation, cigars get caught in the crossfire. The lawmakers don't seem to care that when they aim their guns at big tobacco, they unwittingly harm the many small and family-owned companies that make up so much of the handmade cigar business.

Speaking on behalf of the cigar industry in April were cigar retailer Jeff Borysiewicz, owner of Corona Cigar Co., and Drew Newman, part of the family that owns Tampa's J.C. Newman Cigar Co., which has been selling cigars for 124 years.

"The greatest threat to my business is the heavy hand of government regulations being pushed forward by the FDA," said Borysiewicz, who called the premium cigar business one "that can get squeezed out of business very easily."

Newman compared premium cigars to fine wines. "None of this is standardized—it's an art, a tradition that's been passed down from generation to generation to generation," he said.

Sen. Rubio is that rare lawmaker who seems to understand cigars—he gets it. "If this goes into effect, there are not going to be many premium cigar manufacturers left," Rubio said during the hearing. The senator asked the panelists if premium cigars could end up being a "contraband product" with unchecked FDA regulation. Newman said it was a possibility, saying the government could "squash this industry like a bug...It's what keeps us up at night, and worries us. We urgently need relief."

We applaud Sen. Rubio for his efforts to protect the handmade cigar industry from FDA regulation. Now it's time for his colleagues in Congress to follow along and give the handmade cigar industry the protection from FDA regulation that it absolutely needs.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN EDITOR & PUBLISHER DAVID SAVONA EXECUTIVE EDITOR



out of the humidor

Dear Marvin,

Being a fan of the series, I very much enjoyed your April 2019 article on "The Sopranos." ["First Family," March/April 2019.] There were a couple of bits of information I am curious about. Was James Gandolfini a regular cigar smoker off set, or did he just smoke cigars when called for in his acting career? What cigar brands and vitolas did he smoke during the scenes in "The Sopranos?" And what were his personal favorites?

Numa Robertson Charlotte, North Carolina

Editors' Response: James Gandolfini smoked cigars on screen and off. In the first story we dedicated to "The Sopranos" ["Mob Rule," March/April 2001] writer Mervyn Rothstein interviewed Gandolfini, who spoke about smoking cigars. "I very much love cigars," said Gandolfini at the time. "I'll smoke maybe three or four a week. I'll sit in the same place and not move for 45 minutes. It's a ritual I really enjoy." As for brand, size and shape, he was like many modern-day cigar smokers, eschewing a favorite and preferring to sample. "I like smoking a million different things. Sometimes I'll want something a little stronger, sometimes not. I'm not much of an expert, but I'll know immediately if I like something or if I don't like it. I'm still at the stage where I'm experimenting with many different cigars, and I haven't picked one that I consistently like." His character seemed to share his smoking habits, as we recall Tony Soprano lighting up a variety of cigars, from Ashtons to *Cubans to C.A.O.s and others.*

Dear Marvin,

I am 55 years old and have had a lot of stress from work and the death of a very close friend. We were like father and son. I saw your magazine and tried cigars. I have discovered they are very relaxing. My taste has improved and I am picking up many wonderful flavors. My favorite is Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No 1. I go to my cigar store so often, my tobacconist even gives me a discount.

Ross C. Melhuish Melbourne, Australia

Editors' Response: Our condolences. We're glad to hear that our magazine helped during your difficult times.



"I hope you make a cover poster of this issue, so I can put the last one next to it."

Chris Adams
Submitted via Facebook

Dear Marvin,
This issue (just the cover) is worth my subscription.
Scott Johnson
Evansville, Indiana
submitted via Instagram

Dear Marvin,

I hope you make a cover poster of this issue so I can put the last one next to it. Chris Adams submitted via Facebook

Correction The Cuban Montecristo Petit Edmundo was mislabeled as Nicaraguan in the Buying Guide of the

March/April issue.



Printed in the U.S.A.
A publication of M. Shanken Communications, Inc.
Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10019
212/684-4224 fax: 212/684-5424 e-mail: letters@cigaraficionado.com

VOL. 27 NO. 4

Editor & Publisher MARVIN R. SHANKEN

Executive Editor DAVID SAVONA
Managing Editor GREGORY MOTTOLA
Senior Features Editor JACK BETTRIDGE
Art Director JOHN THOMPSON
Associate Editor ANDREW NAGY
Assistant Editor DAVID CLOUGH

Editorial Assistant/Tasting Coordinator THOMAS PAPPALARDO

Senior Contributing Editor GORDON MOTT

Contributing Editors PAUL A. EISENSTEIN, MARSHALL FINE, LAURIE KAHLE, MICHAEL KAPLAN, LARRY OLMSTED, JEFF WILLIAMS

Photo Editor CASEY OTO
Associate Art Director TODD MILLER
Associate Art Director LISA AURIGEMMA
Designer HENRY ENG
Designer DIANA WITKOWSKI
Promotions Designer LISA GEORGE
Assistant Photo Editor KARISSA MAGGIO

Manager, Cigar Aficionado Online
Production Associate, New Media
Director of Digital Media

Site Developer ANURADHA UDYAVER

Senior Vice President, Ad Sales and Services CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY

Vice President/Associate Publisher BARRY ABRAMS

Corporate Advertising
Director, Beverage/Alcohol Advertising
Senior Account Manager, New Business
Integrated Marketing Director

MIRIAM MORGENSTERN
MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK
GEOFF MADDEN
KRISTIN JOHNSON

Senior Account Directors, West Coast

Southeast Advertising Sales

WHEELER MORRISON, GREEN LEAVES MEDIA

Detroit Advertising Sales
Arizona Golf Advertising Sales
Advertising Events Manager
Sales Assistants

CHRISTINE ANDERSON
STEVE BLIMAN
JENNIFER ARCELLA
JENNY JAIKARAN, MAGGIE KOTRABA

Vice President, Custom Media DON GATTERDAM

Advertising Services Manager CHRISTINA CHIAFFITELLA
New Media Coordinator HILARY CHALSON

Lead Developer RICHARD OWENS
Imaging SAMANTHA SAFFER, ELI HALPERN
Prepress DAVE BOULANGER, ERIC CHEUNG

MICHAEL TURRO

Senior Vice President, Events LYNN RITTENBAND

Senior Events Director LIZ MOTT
Events Director SUSANNAH NOLAN
Senior Events Manager LISA GRIBBIN

Events Manager SHAUNTAY DUNBAR

Senior Vice President, Marketing and Circulation

Senior Circulation Director

Assistant Circulation Manager

Senior Retail Sales Director

LAURA ZANDI
PHYLICIA BEDOYA
TINA RATWANI

Director of Technology

Senior Retail Sales Director JEANNE HOLLY
Retail Account Manager SHIREN FELICIEN

Chairman WARVIN R. SHANKEN
Vice Chairman MICHAEL D. MOABA
Senior Advisor to the Chairman MEL MANNION
Senior Vice President CONSTANCE MCGILVRAY
Senior Vice President LYNN RITTENBAND
Senior Vice President LAURA ZANDI
Chief Financial Officer STEVEN GORDON

> Questions about your subscription? Call 800/365-4929 Questions about your retail sales account? Call 800/344-0763























When you remember life's important moments, you'll remember a Padrón.

For decades, Padrón smokers have shared with us the stories of special moments in their lives that have been distinguished by smoking one of our cigars. Striving to create great cigars worthy of such special times is our singular motivation, those moments shared with family and friends. The Padrón Family thanks you for your continued loyalty and trust in the Padrón name.

www.padron.com





Twenty-one teams competed in the 11th annual Els for Autism Pro-Am at Old Palm Golf Club on March 11, raising more than \$1 million for the charity.

The Pro-Am To Cure Autism

THE 11TH ANNUAL ELS FOR AUTISM PRO-AM RAISED \$1 MILLION

BY DAVID SAVONA

hen major winner Graeme McDowell pulled his golf cart up to the first tee at Old Palm Golf Club, he reached into his bag and pulled out two handmade cigars. Then he smiled as he saw the La Flor Dominicana booth, realizing he had brought coals to Newcastle. There would be no need for your own cigars on this day.

It was the 11th annual Els for Autism Pro-Am, sponsored by CIGAR AFICIONADO and *Wine Spectator* magazines, and the cigars were free-flowing. McDowell soon lit up, joining his four cigar-loving playing partners: radio star Rush Limbaugh, Fox News anchor Brett Baier, former New

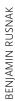
York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, and the most ardent cigar smoker of all, CIGAR AFICIONADO editor and publisher Marvin R. Shanken, who created the Pro-Am with pro golfer Ernie Els.

The charity tournament, held on March 11, raised \$1,020,000, pushing the total raised during the 11-year-history of the event to approximately \$11 million. The money raised has gone to the development of the Els Center of Excellence, an education center in Jupiter, Florida. "We feel it's an absolute game changer in the world of autism," Els said at the pairings dinner the night before the event, held on a warm, clear evening on the picturesque grounds of the Els Center.

Els and Shanken stressed that there

was much more work to be done. "We have already invested \$35 million in this campus," said Shanken at the dinner, "and another \$15 million gets us over the top." Said Els: "We've got a long ways to go."

Shanken's team was one of 21 teeing it up for a very good cause. Each team was paired with a prominent golfer. In addition to Els (a four-time major winner) and McDowell (winner of the 2010 U.S. Open), there was Jack Nicklaus, who has won 18 majors, more than any other player; Nick Price, the winner of three major championships; 2011 Masters Champion Charl Schwartzel; Louis Oosthuizen (winner of the 2010 Open Championship); Ian Baker-Finch, winner of the 1991 Open Championship; two-time LPGA major







Golfing legend Jack Nicklaus, sinking a smooth putt at Old Palm.



Ernie Els teeing off on the first hole. Els and Shanken joined forces to create the Pro-Am after Els revealed that his son Ben was autistic.



LPGA pro Jessica Korda, chipping with perfect form, led the winning team.

winner Cristie Kerr; Abraham Ancer; Kiradech Aphibarnrat; K.J. Choi; Luke Donald; Branden Grace; Li Haotong; Morgan Hoffmann; Chase Koepka; Jessica Korda; Anirban Lahiri; Marc Leishman; CT Pan and Cameron Tringale.

The event was won by the team of LPGA pro Korda, Steve Peck of SAP, Jerry DeMuro and Steve Collis.

Cigar and drink stations were spread

throughout the course for the Pro-Am, keeping a festive mood throughout the day. Drinks were provided by Belvedere Vodka, Glenlivet and Grey Goose, and cigars were provided by Alec Bradley, EPC Cigars, La Flor Dominicana, My Father Cigars and Oliva. Bobby Jones donated shirts. Arturo Fuente and Altadis U.S.A. donated cigars smoked after the dinner on Sunday evening.

The event concluded with a hole-inone contest, sponsored by Wine Australia, with each pro taking a shot at Old Palm's 19th hole, a tricky green defended by water. No aces fell this day, although Schwartzel came closest, with a shot that settled five feet from the cup.

For more coverage of the charitable event, and for more on the past Pro-Ams, visit cigaraficionado.com. •





Perfected over 154 years, yours to enjoy now.

VISIT OUR BOOTH #2259 AT IPCPR

PLASENCIA CIGARS

#LightUpYourSoul PlasenciaCigars.com



State of the state

Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.



style 33 OUT OF THE BLUE

wheels 36 BMW x7

time 38 salmon dials

cigars 41 SON & SON GOLD BULLION ASHTRAY

drink 43 Super Tequilas

sport 45 HAVE A BALL

fun 46 the mob museum













good life guide



The Grand Hotel Le Trois Rois, Basel, Switzerland

or some three centuries, Le Trois Rois has offered travelers a slice of Old European luxury on the banks of the Rhine. Named for Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, the Three Kings offers a level of accommodation that the magi wouldn't ever have contemplated during their trek to see a boy in manger.

The hotel's hospitality has been enjoyed by the likes of Napoleon Bonaparte, Queen Elizabeth II, Pablo Picasso, the Empress of Japan, Duke Ellington, The Rolling Stones, Charles Dickens, Jean Paul Sartre and the Dalai Lama. But the less celebrated among us will also treasure this palace of delights for its sybaritic offerings: fine wine and liquor, heavenly cuisine and a dedicated cigar lounge.

Chef du Bar Thomas Huhn mixes The Vesper, Knob Creek Old Fashioned and Negronis in the elegant Bar Les Trois Rois. At Cheval Blanc, Chef Peter Knogl's cooking will convince you why it was awarded three Michelin stars for its sense of French haute cuisine with Mediterranean and Asian influences. After dinner, choose a digestif from a judicious selection of more than 100 whiskies. Huhn certainly knows his spirits, exhibiting astute choices from select independent whiskey bottlers and Japanese rarities, side by side with Richard Hennessy Cognac and a magnum of the Rémy Martin Black Pearl.

Take your selection downstairs to the hotel's spacious Salon du Cigare. Next to the tidy bar is a walk-in humidor filled with 135 selections. Browse the full range from the bar's touch-screen TV cigar menu or by iPad from the comfort of your leather armchair. The tobacco is predominantly Cuban, but balanced with sections dedicated to smokes from the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras. Reward yourself with a Montecristo No. 2 Gran Reserva or a Cohiba 1966 Edición Limitada 2011. Its



atmosphere is relaxed and clubby with dark wooden bookcases filled with heavy tomes and portraiture. In the summertime, guests can take their time over their cigar on the outside terrace.

The hotel has been sympathetically restored after a refurbishment in 2006 that ensured that the 101 rooms and suites (starting at \$660) retain their period charm while adding the subtle touches of modernity and luxury expected by a discerning clientele. The Suite Les Trois Rois is decorated in an Art Deco style and offers a private rooftop hot tub with unparalleled views over the medieval Old Town—and yet another opportunity to enjoy a fine cigar.

Visit lestroisrois.com

—Jonny McCormick

When You Focus on Quality, the Awards Pour In.

Here at Heaven Hill Distillery, we've been *Lifting America's Spirit Since 1935*®. And one thing that never gets old is winning awards for whiskeys of exceptional quality. In 2017, Elijah Craig® Barrel Proof was named *Whisky Advocate's* Whisky of the Year. Last year, our whiskeys won Best Bourbon, Best Single Barrel Bourbon, and Best Small Batch Bourbon at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. And while awards are great, we never forget our true mission: Preserving the rich traditions of American whiskey-making, guiding its exciting evolution and championing its exciting future.

HEAVEN HILL DISTILLERY 1935





HeavenHillDistillery.com

ounding Brothers



Aniversario 1965















www.natcicco.com





Out of the Blue

he familiar advice offered to men who go shopping for new clothing is that you can't go wrong with navy blue. The problem is you can't go very far right either. As classic as it is, that color has been standard issue for business uniforms forever, meaning you and everyone sports them. This season, it's time to promote your mufti to something more daring, while still staying in the same sector of the color wheel.

Happily, an ocean of other blue tones awaits. The collection for spring/summer from Stefano Ricci, Florence's most exclusive menswear maker, is dubbed "man and the sea" with an imaginative palette that flashes cobalt blue, steel blue, gray-magenta blue,

sapphire blue and gentian blue—everything, it seems, but navy.

The suit silhouette is a trim two-button jacket, with available matching vests. Evening wear is represented with midnight blue and ultramarine suit coats that double as smoking jackets. The color scheme bleeds into other categories, with dress, T- and polo shirts, as well as bags, loafers, shoes and eyewear. The company, which has collaborated with Arturo Fuente on a line of cigars, offers a tool kit (cutter and lighter) packaged in a gray-blue leather box. And what would a blue-themed collection be without blue jeans?

Visit stefanoricci.com

-Jack Bettridge

#1 Cigar
Year
Year
2014



OF RESERVA LIMITADA

ELANIC VRESERVA LIMITAI





The Oliva Serie V Melanio is hand rolled using expertly fermented ligero fillers, leaves known for their robust and rich flavor. This special cigar is sure to exceed a premium cigar smoker's highest expectations.

Blending Notes: The Serie V Melanio is full flavored yet smooth. The long filler tobaccos are a blend of Oliva Nicaraguan Habano that emphasizes tobacco from the Jalapa region, an area known for a more nuanced leaf than the Esteli or Condega regions. This carefully aged Jalapa blend produces a particularly flavored smoke.

COMPLEX / SMOOTH / BALANCED

Wrapper: Ecuadorian Binder: Nicaraguan Filler: Nicaraguan







wheels

good life guide



BMW X7

In the 20 years since BMW launched the X5, one of the original European luxury SUVs, it has filled in most of the remaining white space with products ranging from the X1 to X6. The one gap—a full-size, three-row "ute" that could serve as a counterpoint to BMW's traditional flagship, the 7-Series—has just been plugged by the X7. While at first glance you notice the imposing presence, it would be a mistake to think of the X7 as little more than a stretched version of the familiar X5.

Yes, it's nine inches longer—nearly the size of the Cadillac Escalade or Lincoln Navigator—and boasts the largest-ever application of the familiar BMW double-kidney grille. But the X7 is also loaded with the sort of ultra-premium features you'd expect on a 7-Series—or the also-new 8-Series.

Among other things, there's the new BMW "user experience" which transforms the traditional iDrive-controlled infotainment system into something akin to Amazon's Alexa. Simply say, "Hey, BMW," and it will change radio stations, adjust the climate control, program navigation and a lot more by plain English, rather than

hard-to-remember commands. The X7 also features an array of advanced driver assistance systems, and can even run for extended periods on limited-access highways in hands-free mode.

Like the latest-generation X5, the flagship ute is surprisingly capable on-road or off, with a standard two-axle air suspension that can be raised or lowered manually or automatically. At peak, it boasts nearly nine inches of ground clearance. The Driving Experience Control system allows a motorist to switch between a variety of on- and off-road modes. Select the SAND mode on an unpaved seashore byway and you'll never know you left the pavement.

Starting at \$73,900, the "base" model features a 3.0-liter inline-six making 335 horsepower and 330 pound-feet of torque, enough to pull this massive mule from 0 to 60 in 5.8 seconds. The upgrade is a 4.4-liter, twin-turbo V-8 making 456 hp and 479 pound-feet—shaving the 0 to 60 down to 5.2 seconds.

Visit bmw.com

-Paul A. Eisenstein

Dewars. OUBLE AGED FOR EXTRASMOOTHNESS

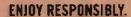


WE AGE















Salmon Dials

ike the pink-hued fish that brave the current to spawn at their place of origin, salmon dial watches, adorned with coppery, golden faces and framed by white metal cases, have returned. In this case, the hottest trend in watch design harks back much further than the one-year breeding cycle of its namesake fish: all the way to the mid-20th century.

The classic Minerva watches of the 1940s and '50s inspired Montblanc's Heritage salmon collection. Minerva was a renowned Swiss chronograph specialist that Montblanc acquired in 2006 so it could manufacture its own movements. While the new Heritage Pulsograph Limited Edition 100 (center, \$30,000) shows off its intricate Minerva workings through a sapphire crystal case back, the dial is salmon with a pulsometer scale for measuring heart rates. The elegant 40-mm, stainless-steel, mono-pusher chronograph gives another nostalgic nod: the watch's chronograph minute counter has elongated indexes at 3, 6 and 9 minutes, once used to keep track of the time elapsed during payphone calls.

Meanwhile, Audemars Piguet dressed up its flagship Royal Oak with a pink-gold-toned "Petite Tapisserie" dial. A boutique exclusive that is sure to be elusive, the 39-mm Royal Oak "Jumbo" Extra-Thin (left, \$55,400) contrasts the salmon dial with a satin-brushed, 18-karat white-gold case and bracelet for a sleek, modern evolution

of Gerald Genta's enduring 1972 vision of a luxury steel sport watch. The use of white gold is a rarity for the popular model as the brand has made Royal Oaks in that metal only once before—in the 1980s.

The boutique brand Czapek & Cie is going all in on the trend with four new Faubourg Cracovie chronographs named for salmon species—Chinook, Coho, Sockeye and King—each with different colorations. Limited to 18 pieces, the Sockeye (right, \$23,500) contrasts navy-blue accents with a dial made of an alloy of 55 percent gold mixed with platinum, palladium and silver with an electroplated salmon finish. The distinctive Résonance pattern used for the hand-guilloché engraving creates concentric circles radiating from the two sub-dials at 3 and 9 o'clock intersecting to form bas-relief squares.

A new version of the highly complicated Datograph Perpetual Tourbillon (\$287,800) from Germany's A. Lange & Söhne has a pink-gold dial. But don't dare call it salmon. "The Swiss do the salmon thing," joked Anthony de Haas, director of product development, at its debut. "We don't like the smell of fish—this is 18-karat solid pink gold."

Visit montblanc.com, audemarspiguet.com, czapek.com, alange-soehne.com

–Laurie Kahle

Dewar's AGED YEARS OUBLE AGED FOR EXTRA

SMOOTHNESS





"Divine stone fruit aromas." Jonny McCormick



WHISKYCAST

"Excellent! Reminder of just how complex and well-rounded a good blend can be."

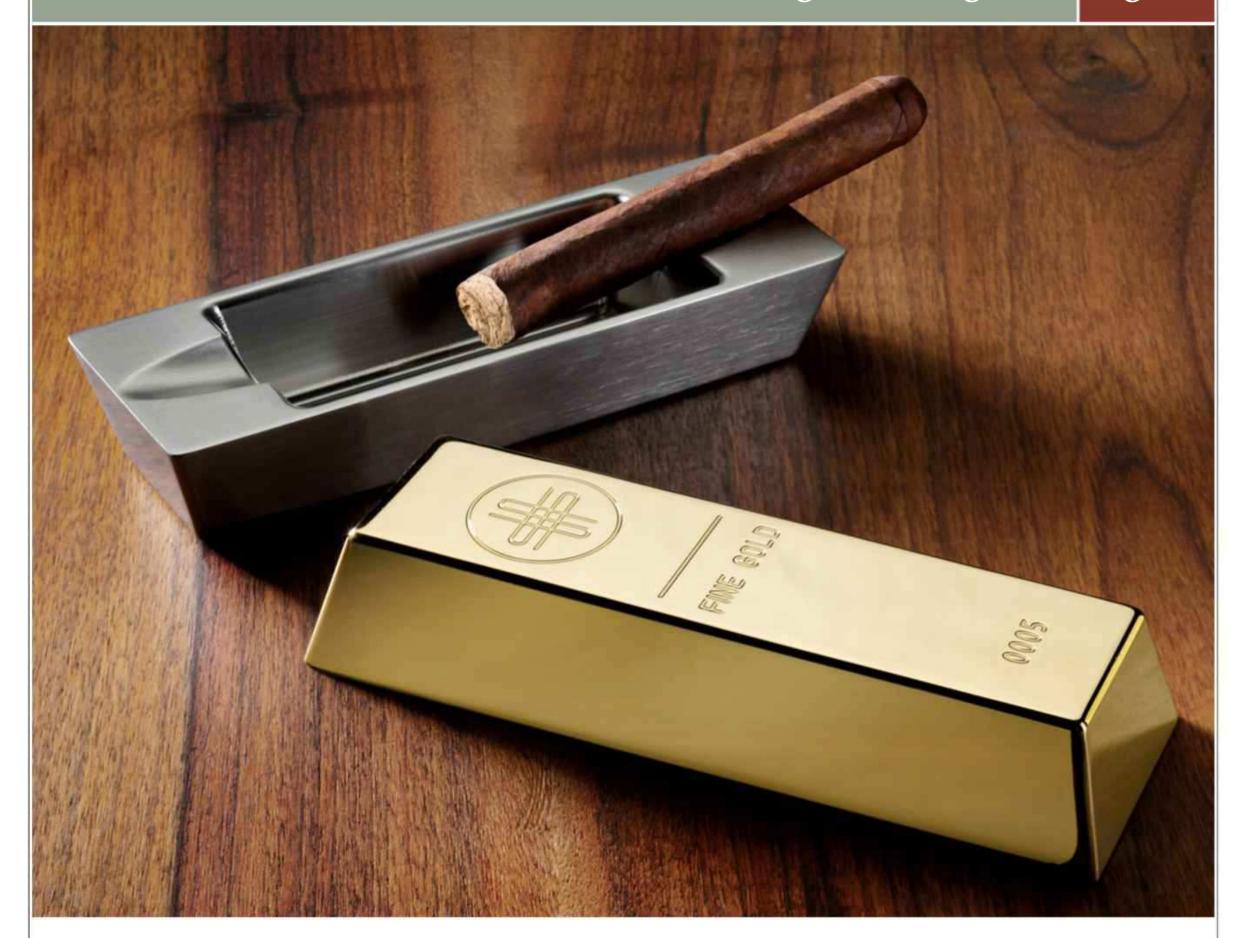
Mark Gillespie





"Excellent. Highly recommended."





Son & Son Gold Bullion Ashtray

Inless you're a high-ranking government official, it's unlikely you'll ever get inside the gold vault at Fort Knox, but that doesn't mean you can't bring a little Fort Knox into your smoking room. Thanks to the vision and engineering acumen of the British company Son & Son, you can now ash your cigar into a gold or silver bar replica so convincing, it will look as though you've robbed the Federal Reserve.

To attain such a realistic look and feel, Son & Son mills its ashtrays from solid blocks of brass (gold model) or steel (silver) on a computer-controlled machine to recreate the sloping bevels of the bullion shape. An ashtray pattern is machined out of the bottom. It's then polished with a brushed-silver satin finish or electroplated in 24K gold—all to stunning effect.

The opulent fine finishes are also durable and burn-resistant. Half the fun is holding the ashtray in your hand just to feel the sheer weight of it (nearly two pounds). But keep in mind, these ashtrays are prone to fingerprints, which is why Son & Son includes a suede cleaning cloth. A quick buffing restores its luster after you've turned the ashtray over to show off its bullion side.

The ashtrays measure 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and they don't come cheap. The silver-bar ashtray costs £599 (\$800), the gold-bar, £799 (\$1,061). Seeing as real gold bullion of equal weight would cost more than \$40,000, these replicas just might be a steal, but then again, who would ever ash on a real bar of gold?

Visit son-son.com

-Gregory Mottola

MICALLEF CIGARS







Building a whole new cigar experience.



Super Tequilas

equila fans know that Mexico's piquant spirit is made from agave, a succulent plant that takes eight to 12 years to mature. Sadly for those in the business, a similar cycle brings an agave shortage once every decade or so. But don't panic. The shortage we're in now comes with some good news: it probably won't last, and the best Tequilas aren't going away.

Underestimating the long-range market brought the trouble, but shortages are predicted to end soon. And many superpremium brands shielded themselves with long-standing agave contracts. Some believe that mass-produced mixto Tequilas were hardest hit. While still called Tequila, they may have sliced their agave nectar content to as little as 51 percent. Skip them and look for bottles labeled "100 percent agave."

That's where you will find the kind of complexity that defines a top-tier liquor. Tequila can pull layers of flavor that are meant for sipping and not for drinking contests.

While the aging trend has created many fine, mature Tequilas, the four categories all have standouts. Patrón Estate Release is essentially clear, yet brings peppery, herbal, doughy and citrus notes that showcase the agave, while being supremely smooth. Stepping up to the reposado category (aged two months to less than a year), you find a Herradura with floral, citrus and buttery vanilla notes. In the same slot is Cazadores, which exhibits meaty fruit, caramel and cinnamon. The next level is añejo (more than a year old, less than three) with drams like Casamigos, which tastes of leather, tropical fruit and rich woods, and Milagro, with oak, nuts and a range of spices. At the extra añejo level (more than three years old) Reserva de la Familia offers brandy flavors with floral notes, almonds and the tang of pimento. Casa Noble makes an eight-year-old version of its Selección del Fundador that exudes dried fruit, cocoa, caramel, truffles and spice.

Savor them slowly though. After all, there's an agave shortage.

-Jack Bettridge





MI CARAGUA Indiana

Unleash the madness of this mind-bending blend with rich, nuanced flavors of Nicaraguan tobaccos hand-rolled in a 2007 vintage Desflorada wrapper.

PSyKo SEVEN Nicaragua cigars are created at the Ortez factory in Condega, Nicaragua.



VenturaCigarCompany.com





y VenturaCigarCo ○ VenturaCigar





Better. Longer. Faster. The newest golf balls on the market boast accolades that might remind you of the old TV show "The Six Million Dollar Man." But the hype is anchored in fact. Golf balls have evolved in huge leaps, and recent tweaks have made good balls even better.

The leader of the pack is the Titleist Pro V1, so dominant that every major championship in 2018 was won by a golfer playing this ball, or its (slightly) harder variation, the Pro V1x. The 2019 versions, which appeared in January, boast thinner urethane covers and thicker inner casing layers to increase ball speed. And the cores are stiffer, designed to boost driving distance and add forgiveness while maintaining the ball's distinctive ability to stick to a green. Another new development: You can even get them in yellow. A dozen retails for \$52.

TaylorMade, played by such standouts as Dustin Johnson and Rory McIlroy, has enhanced its TP5 and TP5x balls (\$44.99/dozen) to better convert compression into speed. The ball's five layers become increasingly stiff from the core to the soft,

urethane cover. Callaway's new Chrome Soft X Triple Track (\$44.99/dozen) went on sale April 19. With their increased speed, short-iron feel and what Callaway calls "exceptional mishit forgiveness," the balls can be found in the pockets of Phil Mickelson and other stars. No need for a Sharpie with this new model—red-and-blue alignment lines are stamped on every ball. The new Wilson Staff Duo Professional (\$34.99/dozen) is an enhanced version of the Wilson Staff Duo. The new ball came out in December, and is built to add more spin to your wedges, perfect for holding a tough green.

For those who are truly confident, how about playing golf with a ball that says TIGER on the side? For you, there is Bridgestone's TOUR B XS Tiger Woods Edition, which Woods himself used to great effect to win The Masters in April. A portion of sales of the \$44.99/dozen balls goes to Woods' TGR Foundation. If you're really daring, try playing with these while wearing red and black on a Sunday.

—David Savona

left; Bettmann archive/getty images; right; ethan miller/getty images

The Mob Museum



n a cold February morning in 1929, four men, two of whom dressed as police, entered a Chicago garage, lined up five gangsters, a former optician and a mechanic and filled them with lead. The site of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre was long ago leveled, but the bullet-pocked wall against which the victims stood still exists in Las Vegas. The painstakingly resurrected artifact of history's most infamous mob execution is among the exhibits in that city's Mob Museum, an institution dedicated to education, but nonetheless captivating for its morbid content.

"People are drawn to the characters. They are charismatic individuals with their fingers on the levers of power. People are intrigued by that kind of crime, fascinated by how it works," says Geoff Schumacher, the museum's senior director of content, a historian who's quick to say "I was never in the mob." But much of what the public thinks they know about organized crime comes from



The barber's chair in which the founder of Murder, Inc. Albert Anastasia was rubbed out is on display at the Mob Museum, a Las Vegas facility that documents, but doesn't glorify the stories of racketeers like Al Capone (left).

movies and TV. The museum strives to separate myth from reality, while explaining the inner workings.

Appropriately, the facility is located at a former courthouse that once hosted a Kefauver Committee hearing (the Senate crime investigation dramatized in *The Godfather Part II*). Exhibits like 100 Years of Made Men feature photos and bios of mobsters from small-time crooks to kingpins such as "Lucky" Luciano, Al Capone and Carmine "The Cigar" Galante, who even in gory death still clenched a cigar in his teeth.

But the museum emphasizes criminology, with much collected evidence (e.g., coroner reports and slugs removed from bodies) among its artifacts. Its crime lab offers an interactive experience. The Firearm Training Simulator places participants firmly on the side of the law. "We are not in the business of glorifying the mob," says Schumacher.

While Chicago and New York are famous for racketeering, the Mob Museum shows how organized crime infected the whole country, in places like Kansas City, New Orleans, Detroit, Boston and, of course, Las Vegas. And should the size of society's seamy underbelly start to weigh on you, you can always visit the basement's replicated speakeasy, where a working pot still churns out hootch—legal, not bootleg.

Visit themobmuseum.org

—Jack Bettridge



C A M P F I R E S M O K I N E S S

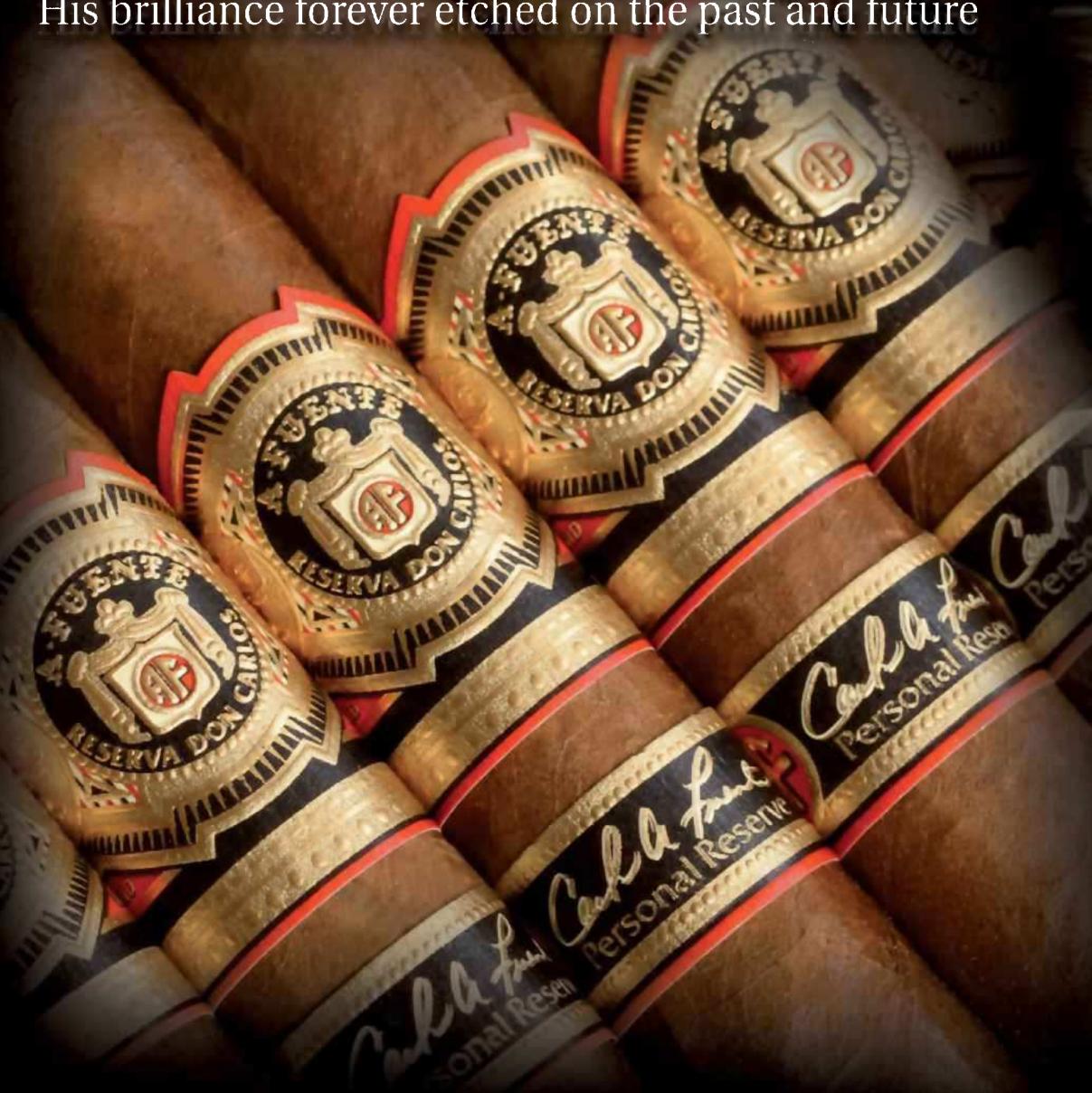


TOFFEE

NO.4 IN THE GLENFIDDICH EXPERIMENTAL SERIES

Glenfiddich has long pushed boundaries and challenged traditions. Never has this been more evident than with Fire & Cane. It's a bold fusion of campfire smokiness with oak and peaty notes, finished in Latin rum casks to produce a surprising toffee sweetness.

Arturo Fuente DON CARLOS His brilliance forever etched on the past and future



ONE MAN, ONE AMAZING STORY...



Since 1912





ROLLIS OF a Lifetime

"Billions" star Paul Giamatti shifts seamlessly from one unforgettable role to the next

BY MARSHALL FINE PORTRAITS BY DAVID NEEDLEMAN

AUL GIAMATTI stood on a movie set, surrounded by hundreds of extras, most of them made up to look like talking monkeys, just like he was. And at that moment, he knew he'd made it. "As a kid, if you'd told me I was going to be in a *Planet of the Apes* movie, I would have felt like the most powerful human being on Earth," Giamatti says, his eyes brightening as he

thinks back to Tim Burton's multimillion-dollar 2001 remake. "Then I got paid, and I thought, 'If I can keep working like this, I'm going to be OK.'"

Now 51, Giamatti is more than OK: He has flourished, in an almost-30-year career that has included Emmy and Golden Globe awards, along with nominations for an Oscar and a Tony. The man wears his stardom as lightly as the thin jacket he's donned against a rainy March morning in New York. In a black sweater and khakis, balding with glasses, he looks like the kind of guy who reads books while he rides the subway. A voracious reader and science-fiction buff ("I like oddball things," he says) Giamatti has been photographed doing exactly that, the photos going viral on social media.

Greeted as a regular at Teresa's restaurant in his Brooklyn Heights neighborhood in the lull before lunch, he sits at a table in the rear and orders an egg-white omelette and kasha. In person, he looks like a carefree version of Chuck Rhoades Jr., his driven character on "Billions," the Showtime series that had just finished filming its fourth season.

His receding brown hair and beard show more gray than the burnished Rhoades.

 $STYLING\ BY\ MICHAEL\ FISHER\ FOR\ THE\ WALL\ GROUP$ $GROOMING\ BY\ MELISSA\ DEZARATE\ FOR\ THE\ WALL\ GROUP$

The ferocity that always flickers in his character's eyes is nowhere to be seen. In conversation, Giamatti's blue-green eyes are inviting, inquisitive, amused.

Part of a generation of actors that includes Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt and George Clooney, Giamatti has carved out his own unique place as a leading man with the soul and look of a character actor. If this were the 1940s, he wouldn't be Cary Grant or Gary Cooper, he'd be Humphrey Bogart. In the same way that the teen and collegeaged baby boomers of the 1960s rediscovered Bogart, Giamatti is connecting with a younger generation that was introduced to

Any person's list of their 10 favorite movies will have one with Paul Giamatti in there somewhere.

him as the crazy jerk who got dyed blue in the 2002 teen comedy, *Big Fat Liar*. His star run in "Billions" has reintroduced him to a millennial audience eager to delve into his rich filmography.

"Any person's list of their 10 favorite movies will have one with Paul Giamatti in there somewhere," says Valerie Bodurtha, one of the organizers of Wax Paul Now, an effort by fans to get Madame Tussaud's to create a wax replica of Giamatti. "I thought it was hilarious," Giamatti says. "They papered neighborhoods all up and down the East Coast with flyers. People were sending me pictures of the poster on telephone poles in Miami. Hey, nothing would make me happier."

That attitude only adds to Giamatti's street cred as a serious actor who doesn't take himself too seriously. Since winning both the Emmy and the Golden Globe for *John Adams* in 2008, he has

continued to build his reputation in films like *12 Years a Slave* and *Straight Outta Compton* and television shows from "Downton Abbey" to "Inside Amy Schumer," where he earned an Emmy nomination playing a very long-suffering God. "I just want to continue to be a working actor," he says, an approach that has endeared him to a list of directors that includes Steven Spielberg, Milos Forman, Tim Burton, Alexander Payne, Ron Howard and Tom McCarthy.

"It's always one thing to talk about complexity and conflict within a character. It's quite another to witness an actor exploring that," says Bill Pohlad, who cast Giamatti in *Love & Mercy*.

The youngest of three children of the late A. Bartlett Giamatti, a classical scholar who was president of Yale University and commissioner of baseball, Paul Giamatti attended private schools, then Yale, and considered teaching. But, after getting his undergraduate degree, a fondness for acting led to several years working with an experimental theater troupe in Seattle, an experience that made him decide to study acting seriously. He came back to Yale for grad school, then almost immediately launched himself on the New York stage, picking up TV work along the way. His breakout film role came playing Howard Stern's explosive foil in 1997's *Private Parts*, a character who Stern nicknamed Pig Vomit. Giamatti even got the film's last word, in a post-credits monologue that ends with Giamatti screaming, "Howard Stern can kiss my ass in Hell!"

It's amazing how many notable films Giamatti pops up in. You're watching *Saving Private Ryan*, *Donnie Brasco*, *The Truman Show* or *Man on the Moon* and, suddenly, hey, isn't that Paul Giamatti in that small but compelling role? He's done so many different things that you'd be hard-pressed to single out one film that epitomizes his style. Nobody is better at the cranky loner (*American Splendor*) or the luckless scrambler trying to hold his





On a mission: Giamatti's Chuck Rhoades from "Billions" (shown as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York) is driven to win, no matter the cost.

own in a confusing world (*All Is Bright*). Dig a little deeper into the Giamatti filmography, however, and you find characters as diverse as the quietly authoritative police detective in *The Illusionist* or the seductive TV producer in *Barney's Version*.

He's as much at home as the irascible wine snob of *Sideways* as he is playing the good-guy wrestling coach in *Win Win*. He'll disappear into a real-life character like former Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke (*Too Big to Fail*), then turn around and do a literary costume drama (*Madame Bovary*). He's played Santa Claus (*Fred Claus*,) a Marvel villain plucked from the comics (*The Amazing Spider-Man 2*), a crucial Shakespearean character (*Romeo and Juliet*)—Giamatti has even played an actor named Paul Giamatti in the funny, strange *Cold Souls*.

If the man hasn't been film and TV's most valuable player for the past decade, he's certainly among the top contenders.

For a perfect example of Giamatti's ability to find humanity and humor in a cringe-worthy moment, look at a scene from the early going in 2018's *Private Life*. Giamatti and Kathryn Hahn play a married couple desperately and unsuccessfully trying to have a child. When a doctor suggests the husband's fertility may be the issue, Giamatti is sent off to produce a sperm sample. As '90s-era porn plays on a TV in his sterile little collection room, he

sits there, pants down, cup in hand, obviously not aroused, a look of resignation and futility on his face. He's ready to give up—but when he reaches for a remote to turn the video off, he instead seems able only to make the volume louder, stabbing at the remote frantically, to hilarious effect.

"Everything he does is done with such integrity and truth and longing and angst," Hahn says. "I had worshipped him from afar. People kept telling me, 'You're going to love him' and it was like walking into a friendship. I remember Tamara [Jenkins, director of *Private Life*] saying that watching Paul's face is like watching the weather. He's an incredible listener."

Casting directors tend to remember the more flamboyant roles, like the cartoonishly volatile bad guy in *Shoot 'Em Up* or the paranoid CEO in *Duplicity*. When he was being considered to play an amiable, upbeat driver for starchy Emma Thompson in *Saving Mr. Banks*, there was doubt. "They were concerned if I could seem like an ordinary, nice guy," Giamatti says. "Dustin Hoffman told me once that every actor has two characters in him—three, if he's lucky. Everything else is just a variation. People used to only see me for certain kinds of things—more depressed guys, at the start. Now I get more power-monger roles offered to me. I don't get offered that many leads, but the supporting stuff is intriguing and varied."

A SMILLS







f ☑ ◎ □ @JOYACIGARS JOYACIGARS.COM Every character is distinctive, but his performances share a common feature: Giamatti's seamless transformation, to the benefit of the project around him. "You can't take your eyes off Paul Giamatti when he's performing," says director F. Gary Gray, who cast Giamatti in two films. "That's a very unique quality. You know he's giving his all. And he happens to be extremely entertaining."

Tom McCarthy, who cowrote and directed the Oscar-winning *Spotlight*, has known Giamatti since they were grad students at the Yale School of Drama: "I don't think I've considered a project where his name didn't come up," says McCarthy, who directed Giamatti in *Win Win*. "It's not just his range, it's the way he connects with material. It's about how literate he is and how he handles language. He can make even bad writing seem good."

Maggie Siff, who plays Giamatti's wife on "Billions," says Giamatti's talent comes without an ego. "As talented and powerful as he is, Paul is humble and self-effacing. He's the least hierarchical person I know. He's got a voracious appetite for work, a passion and a quick intelligence."

While the role of Chuck Rhoades wasn't written specifically for Giamatti, he was always the producers' first choice, say two of the show's cocreators, David Levien and Brian Koppelman. But Giamatti was involved with a pilot for another show and originally unavailable. When they heard that pilot didn't get picked up, Levien and Koppelman pounced, locking Giamatti down for their series.

"We'd seen him play those characters who get the short end of the stick, which he does so well," Levien says. "But in *The Illusionist*, he was playing a guy who was the smartest guy in the room, next to the Illusionist. That was when we saw he could play this kind of commanding figure. So for him to play a powerful prosecutor—a high-flying achiever—well, we felt we knew something other people didn't know."

"He has an incredible tool kit," says Koppelman. "He's a brilliant man, with a wicked sense of humor. Which dovetails nicely with Chuck Rhoades."

For its first three seasons, "Billions" pitted Giamatti's Rhoades against Bobby "Axe" Axelrod, played by Damian Lewis. Rhoades, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, wanted to



bring down the ruthless hedge-fund billionaire Axelrod. To make things interesting, Rhoades' wife, Wendy (Maggie Siff), works for Axe as his in-house shrink. By the end of the third season, both men had suffered serious career reversals and wound up as allies for the start of Season 4. But, Giamatti notes, they'd probably never be friends.

"The wife is the complicating factor," he says. "My guy is very



The Rhoades men, father and son, played by Giamatti and Jeffrey DeMunn. They fight, but agree on the finer points, including the charms of a great cigar.

jealous of that relationship between Axe and Wendy. Chuck and Axe are both super-Type A. Not being a Type A myself, I don't know how they'd get along. But they're both pragmatists. So each one recognizes the usefulness of the other."

And Mr. and Mrs. Rhoades are not your run-of-the-mill power couple. The very first shot of the show's pilot revealed that Chuck and Wendy's sex life was far from the mundane, and involved sadomasochism, with her as the dominatrix and him as the submissive. Playing that particular sexual twist with Giamatti is always educational, says Siff: "Paul has so much power as an actor but, from a professional perspective, he never feels dominant," she says. "His acts of submission on this show are so forceful that it makes the act of being dominated powerful and mind-bending."

For his part, Giamatti says that being trussed up as part of the Rhoades' bondage-and-domination rituals is actually relaxing. He's even been known to doze off between takes while tied up on the set. "It's akin to swaddling a baby," Giamatti hypothesizes. "Obviously, it's comforting, though probably not in the way most people think of comfort."

Like a number of characters he has played over the years, Chuck Rhoades indulges in cigars, usually with his power-broker father (played by Jeffrey DeMunn). "I remember we shot a scene at Nat Sherman, because Jeff's character had a private humidor there," Giamatti says. "In fact, Jeff had a whole speech about cigars. It's definitely a cigar-y world. These are ostentatious, wealthy guys. Cigars are a symbol of their power and wealth."

The varied characters Giamatti has played approached cigars in different ways. The conniving movie producer Marty Wolf in *Big Fat Liar* lights a huge stogie, then uses it to ignite papers. In his Oscar-nominated role as boxing manager Joe Gould in *Cinderella Man*, he kept a cigar jammed in the corner of his mouth: "He was very feisty and old-school." And the aging womanizer in *Barney's Version*? "That guy smoked very self-indulgently."

Giamatti smokes on-screen, but not off. Cigars are props through which he helps both create and discover the character—in the same way he uses things like a cane, a pipe or a pair of glasses. "There is a way that it physically frees you up," he says. "It frees the mind and the body; it's very expressive." While researching America's second president to play him in *John Adams*, Giamatti says, "I came across this stray anecdote, which made a reference to Adams 'chain-smoking' cigars. So I talked to the show's period advisers about it. We decided he must have gotten them shipped to him from Holland. We finally settled on



THE WORLD'S NºI AÑEJO CRISTALINO TEQUILA

FOR THOSE WHO KNOW

THOSE WHO KNOW DRINK RESPONSIBLY. DON JULIO Tequila. 40% Alc/Vol. © 2019. Imported by Diageo Americas, Norwalk, CT.

BAROMA DE CUBA





A taste from another time



laaromadecuba.com

these little black cigars from Connecticut and I smoked them all the way through."

"Billions" examines power in all its forms: how to get it, how hard it is to keep it and how it transforms the people it touches. Giamatti doesn't pretend to understand the series' serpentine saga of aggression, reversal and double-dealing. ("I can't keep up with the plot," he admits.) Still, he says, "It's enhanced my understanding of the transactional nature of those worlds and how deep it goes. But that kind of thing exists in my profession as well."

Being in a television series allows Giamatti regularly scheduled hiatuses, which he has used for other projects, starring in *Private Life* and playing supporting roles in films such as *The Catcher Was a Spy, The Phenom* and *Morgan*. He'll be seen opposite Dwayne Johnson in next year's *Jungle Cruise*. He also used some of the time to shepherd his son Samuel to look at colleges. Giamatti has been divorced from his ex Elizabeth for nearly a decade.

"If it's possible, we've managed to have a happy divorce. We live in the same neighborhood and we'll all have dinner together. It's all very Brooklyn Heights, very 'woke,'" he explains, arching a trademark eyebrow to mock himself.

In addition to his on-screen work, he's also produced films and TV series (AMC's "Lodge 49"). "There's a certain satisfaction in helping to facilitate something, or to help a writer," he says.

The alliance between former enemies Rhoades and Axelrod on Season 4 of "Billions" meant more scenes between Giamatti and Damian Lewis, who'd rarely shared the screen in the first three seasons.

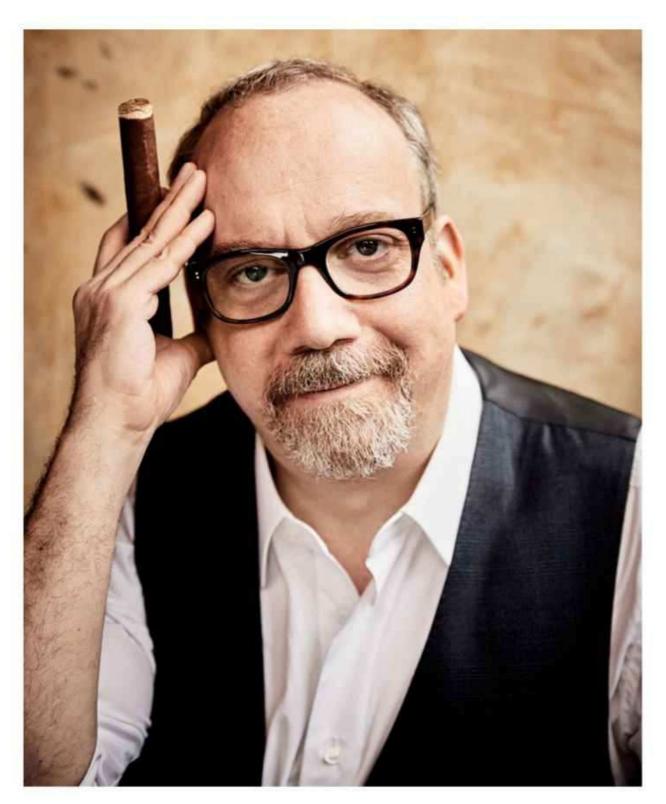
That has renewed talk about Giamatti and Lewis doing a play together. At one point, a couple of years ago, the two floated the idea of hitting the boards in Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*. The casting seems obvious—or does it?

"Clearly, the obvious thing is for Paul to do the Walter Matthau role and Damian to play Felix," Koppelman says. "But I think both could do either role." Giamatti was a creature of the stage before he

"He has an incredible tool kit. He's a brilliant man, with a wicked sense of humor." —Brian Koppelman

moved into film: "I've never gotten the same satisfaction working in film that I get onstage," he says. "But I'm more used to it now. I'm more in control, yet free at the same time. It's funny and odd. But I would like to do theater again." He last was on stage in 2013, when he played the title character in *Hamlet* at Yale Repertory Theater. The experience was both exhausting and enriching.

"I took away so much from that," he says. "The major thing is that I think it's actually a pitch-black comedy, a sick comedy. You can't do it right without mining the comedy. I feel like I got about



40 percent of it right. It's such an interesting part. As a stage play, it will always be a step ahead of us. And we'll always be catching up...physically, I don't think I could do it now. Stamina is hard."

Giamatti is reminded of a scene from 2002, where he danced while clad only in a plaid Speedo. "Yeah, I was in very good shape then," says Giamatti, whose body has lately trended more round. "I was swimming and doing yoga. Right now, I'm in better shape than I have been for a few years. I started doing yoga and exercising again, knowing I was going to need stamina for this series."

Indeed, one of Giamatti's secrets may be that he has, to a certain extent, looked middle-aged since his 20s. Now 51, he seems comfortable with just who he is.

"I never cared much about what I looked like," he says. "I'm perfectly comfortable with it. Turning 50 was not bad. Although, physically, it was like someone flipped a switch and I started falling apart. Literally on my 50th birthday. Those biological milestones hit with real accuracy. But I think I'd rather be this age than 20 again, except physically.

"When I was 20, I thought I knew everything. Now I know that I don't know shit. And I'm more comfortable with that." ❖

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is critic-in-residence at The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham, NY.

















Pebble Beach, one of the world's most storied golf courses, celebrates 100 years as it hosts the U.S. Open in June BY JEFF WILLIAMS



= PEBBLE <math>100 BEACH =

at the Pebble Beach Golf Links, where the Pacific Ocean and the headland meet just above the teeming waters, an otter floats on its back, banging a rock against an abalone shell. Playful mammals like this one have

sought their dinner here for millennia, without regard to who is passing by, just a sand wedge away. For the past

century, those visitors have included Bobby Jones, Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods, who have all come this way in search of trophies and championships. Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Clint Eastwood, Jack Lemmon and Sean Connery have come this way, too, stars in search of a bauble or two and a few laughs along the way.

Amateur players of all calibre, whether they aspire to swing a club like Nicklaus or Woods or showcase the talent of Crosby or Hope, flock to Pebble Beach by the thousands each year to play what is fairly called America's national treasure of golf.

Tom Kite, a winner of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am in 1983 and the U.S. Open at Pebble in 1992, spent his career marveling at this stretch of 18 holes on the Monterey Peninsula where ocean and land embrace. "Even

when you are playing in a tournament, I don't think there is a player who doesn't just look out over the course and ocean and go 'wow,'" says Kite. "Of course it's a distraction. But what a distraction."

This year, Pebble Beach celebrates its 100th birthday, and what could be a more fitting party than the playing of the U.S. Open there this June, the sixth time the national championship will be conducted on this glorious ground.

"It's got to be a national treasure," says Mike Davis, CEO of the United States Golf Association. "Even if you ask non-golfers in this country to name a place or two in golf and they know nothing about the game, I'm hard-pressed to believe that Pebble Beach won't be one that comes up.

It's an historic course. An absolutely aesthetically gorgeous golf course. It's a wonderful test of golf."

Samuel F.B. Morse, the Duke of Del Monte, may not have seen

this stretch of headland along Stillwater Cove and Carmel Bay as a test, but he did see it as a treat, and because of his foresight Pebble Beach ultimately took its place in golf's Valhalla.

When things were going from bad to worse during World War I for the Pacific Development Co., the entity that owned this precious land and had originally sought to build homes there, Morse was brought in to liquidate its holdings. Realizing what a special place it was, he eventually took control of the properties himself with the idea of building a golf course and selling lots to build bigger homes that overlook the area, hoping to attract vacationers to the log lodge that already existed. When Morse couldn't get iconic American golf course designer C.B. Macdonald to do the course, and the prolific Scottish architect Donald Ross was in the English army, he settled on two top California amateurs, Jack Neville and Douglas

Grant, to lay out the course that opened in 1919. There have been changes, principally by Chandler Egan in 1928, who turned the 18th (originally a short par 4) into the memorable par 5 that challenges amateurs and pros alike. Jack Nicklaus built the new par-3 fifth hole in 1997 and Arnold Palmer oversaw a few alterations. But the overall routing has been essentially the same for 90 years and has withstood whatever Mother Nature could throw its way.









From the outset, Morse had grand plans for Pebble Beach. It was built at a time when virtually all the big-time tournament golf in the United States was played east of the Mississippi River. The USGA had never held one of its championships west of St. Louis. But Morse knew what he had and knew what he wanted and he convinced the USGA to hold the 1929 U.S. Amateur at Pebble Beach, a huge accomplishment. At the time, the Amateur was a significantly bigger deal than the Open. Bringing the Amateur to Pebble Beach meant bringing the immortal Bobby Jones to the West and all the national publications who followed the game's biggest star.

Neal Hotelling, the longtime historian of Pebble Beach, sees the 1929 Amateur as putting Pebble Beach on the championship map. "That the USGA finally came to California, the publicity around that was huge," says Hotelling. "The fact that Bobby Jones was playing in California and then lost in California made bigger headlines. Pebble Beach became a household name as a great golf course after the '29 Amateur."

Then came Bing Crosby. The man who crooned "Straight Down the Middle" is the man who brought his Bing Crosby National Pro-Am to Pebble Beach in 1947, creating a format of pros playing with amateurs all four days, putting up the \$5,000 purse himself and insisting that all ticket sales go to charity, essentially setting the framework for the game's charitable underpinning.

In 1958, the two primal forces of golf arrived at Pebble Beach to join Crosby and his celebrity friends—Arnold Palmer and television. Palmer was on the launch pad of his meteoric career (he would win his first Masters two months later) and with television honed in on his every move, Pebble Beach provided "The King" and the game with an unrivaled dramatic stage. "Bing got the tournament televised and Arnold Palmer became the most telegenic golfer of all time," says Hotelling. "It was kismet."

Palmer never won "The Crosby" or an Open at Pebble, but he did add to its lore. In 1967, he was a stroke out of the lead on Sunday playing the par-5 14th hole when he hit two consecutive 3-wood

ELENDED FOR SMOOTHNESS. AWARDED FOR QUALITY.





= PEBBLE 100 BEACH =





"It's two different courses. In February, you have softer conditions and you know where your ball is going to stop. In an Open, the ball is going to bounce. You have to factor that, but you really can't predict it." —Phil Mickelson

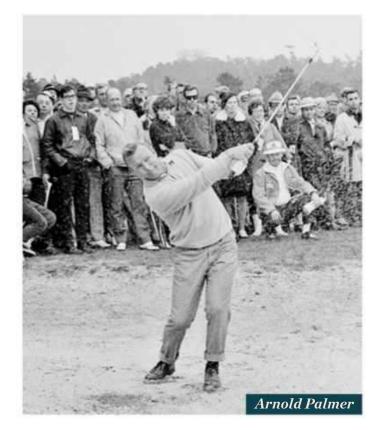
approach shots that caromed off a tree short and right of the green. Both balls bounced out of bounds. He ended up finishing second. The tree? A storm blew it down that night.

Along came Jack Nicklaus to win the 1961 U.S. Amateur at Pebble and along came Nicklaus again in 1972 to win the first U.S. Open played on the course, a championship that would have longterm implications. It was the first Open played on a public-access golf course, one without a membership base that would usually handle all the volunteer aspects of running a tournament.

It was Morse who had fought hard to bring the Open to Pebble Beach, but he died in 1969 without seeing the USGA fulfill his dream. The organization was

leery of bringing the championship to the site. "The USGA felt that it was too far away from any large metropolitan area with San Francisco being two-plus hours away, Los Angeles even farther," says Hotelling. "Secondly, it was a public golf course. That continued to be a big concern for them. The biggest one was that USGA relied on the members to fill the volunteer positions and Pebble Beach didn't have any members."

Aime Michaud, Morse's successor, got the job done, in part by guaranteeing revenue to the USGA. And Pebble has certainly become a darling of the U.S. Open. After that first Open in 1972,



the Open would return again in 1982, 1992 and 2000, setting the precedent for the USGA to take it to another public access course, the Black Course at Bethpage State Park in New York, in 2002. When the Open returns in June, for the sixth time, it will put Pebble into a tie with Oakland Hills for third place among U.S. Open venues. Only Baltusrol (with seven Opens) and Oakmont (nine) will have hosted more.

Pebble Beach is really two different courses, one for the AT&T National Pro-Am in February during the rainy season, when the weather can come up fast and mimic Scotland, and one during a U.S. Open in June when it's been dry and the course gets firm. Phil Mickelson is well acquainted with Pebble's dual personality, having won his

fifth AT&T this past February and playing in every Open there since 1992. Mickelson's grandfather, Al Santos, was an original caddie at Pebble, and Mickelson made his pro debut there in the '92 Open.

"In February, you have softer conditions and you know where your ball is going to stop," said Mickelson after his opening round at the AT&T this year. "In an Open here, the ball is going to bounce. It's going to bounce on the fairways and the greens. You have to factor that, but you really can't predict it. The greens are so small that coming out of the rough it's very difficult to keep your ball on the green or get it close to the hole. It's two different courses."



On June 13, the U.S. Open will return to Pebble Beach for the sixth time. The previous Opens contested on these storied seaside holes have rarely disappointed, and have served as a gorgeous stage to some of the most memorable moments in golf.

—— 1972 ——

The first U.S. Open at Pebble Beach befit the grandeur of America's national treasure. The leaderboard had Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Johnny Miller and Lee Trevino on it, proving that cream would rise to the top on this course.

A brisk wind off the ocean greeted the players for the final round on Sunday with Nicklaus in the lead. When he tapped in for birdie on the second hole he was up by three shots, but the Golden Bear sailed his drive on 10 onto the beach below the bluff, made double bogey, and let the chasers back into the tournament. But all hopes ended on the 17th. With the wind howling into him, Nicklaus stood on the tee box of that par 3, facing a 218-yard shot. He took a mighty swing with his 1-iron. The ball bored through the wind, landed a foot from the hole, hit the flag and dropped down inches away for a gimme birdie, which put the cap on Nicklaus' 13th major.



1982

This Open all came down to Nicklaus and Tom Watson on Sunday. The two were tied when Watson, playing in the final group, sank a 35-foot birdie putt on the 14th, going a shot up. Nicklaus, who was three holes ahead, had a chance to move into the lead on the final hole, facing an 18-footer for birdie, but he powered it through the break, and had to settle for par. Watson fell back into a tie with a bogey on 16, and things didn't look good for him when he pulled his tee shot on the 17th into the thick collar rough to the left of the hole, leaving him a delicate downhill chip.

"Get it close," said his caddy, Bruce Edwards. "I'm going to sink it," said Watson.

And darned if he didn't. And darned if he didn't make birdie on the 18th for a two-shot win and his sole U.S. Open title.

- 1992 —

Most of the talk entering this Open centered around the prospects of Greg Norman, Nick Faldo, Fred Couples and a host of other big names, including a heralded amateur named Phil Mickelson, who made his professional debut at Pebble. Lefty shot a 68 in the first round, then an 81 the second day to miss the cut. Few were talking about Tom Kite, the solid professional who had made the cut at Pebble Beach as an amateur in 1972. But Kite was high up on the leaderboard as the Sunday round began, a shot behind the leader, Dr. Gil Morgan.

Cloudy skies were predicted for the final round, but as the sun started to shine through, the winds started to blow. Colin Montgomerie, who had started hours ahead of the leaders, finished with even par 288 and was the leader in the clubhouse. Nicklaus, in the commentary booth for ABC, predicted that Montgomerie would win.

Kite's windblown 6-iron to the iconic short par-3 seventh bounced into the rough left of the green, maybe 35 feet from the hole. His chip was pure as could be, hopping twice then rolling straight in for a birdie. After he birdied the 12th, Kite held a fourshot lead, which dropped to two after bogeys at 16 and 17. But his superb par on the 18th was all he needed to collect his sole major championship.

-2000-

This was the Tiger Woods Open. It was flat-out no contest. With Woods at the height of his powers, he conquered the course and destroyed the field with a display of golf that might never again be matched.

Woods opened with a six-under-par 65, a shot up on Miguel Ángel Jiménez. A second round 69 put him six shots ahead. As the weather conditions got testier on Saturday, Woods' lead ballooned to 10 after he shot a 71. Ernie Els moved into second place, but he was effectively four cars behind Woods' locomotive. A 67 in the final round gave Woods a total of 272 and all-time record 15-shot victory. This was Woods' first U.S. Open win, and the start of what became known as the Tiger Slam. He would go on to win the British Open and PGA Championship in 2000 and the Masters in 2001, holding all four major trophies at once.

- 2010 -

The two players in the final pairing on Sunday at this U.S. Open couldn't have been more different. The big-hitting Dustin Johnson and the precision-playing Graeme McDowell went off together with Johnson holding a three-shot lead. Johnson, then a star in the making, seemed likely to etch his name on his first major championship trophy.

Then Johnson blew up. On the second hole, his approach shot into heavy rough with a terrible stance lead to a triple bogey seven. On the third, he drastically pulled his drive, lost the ball in the hazard and went on to make double. D.J. stumbled his way to a final-round flameout of 82.

Playing alongside him, McDowell was just trying to stay steady. When he made bogeys on the ninth and 10th, he was surprised to see that he led by two shots, the closest player to him the unheralded Frenchman Grégory Havret. McDowell held his nerve, posted a 74 and walked away with his sole major.



POINT OF VIEW



NEW to The FAMILY, ALEC BRADLEY Magic Toast.

ALEC BRADLEY LIVE FRUE.

>>> Available at the finest tobacconists worldwide.



Maple Plain, MN **AUG** JUNE of 14 regional events across the United States. Entry Fee \$950 Entry Fee: \$600 **Harbour Town Golf Links Fazio Foothills Golf Course TPC Sugarloaf** 26 01 10 Hilton Head Island, SC Duluth, GA Austin, TX JUNE **APRIL** AUG Entry Fee \$650 Entry Fee: \$650 Entry Fee: \$950 The Stadium Course at CordeValle Golf Club 15 Philadelphia Country Club 29 01 **TPC Scottsdale** San Martin, CA Gladwyne, PA **APRIL AUG** JULY Scottsdale, AZ Entry Fee \$1,100 Entry Fee: \$1,000 Entry Fee: \$650 The Club at Carlton Woods Caves Valley Golf Club 09 **Duke University Golf Club** 05 29 The Woodlands, TX Owings Mills, MD AUG Durham, NC **SEPT APRIL** Entry Fee \$650 Entry Fee: \$1,200 Entry Fee \$600 **Trump National Golf Club**

The Club at Snoqualmie Ridge

Snoqualmie, WA

Entry Fee: \$650

up for the Challenge!

FIND OUT MORE AND **REGISTER AT E4AGOLF.COM**



The 2019 Els for Autism Golf Challenge consists

Old Marsh Golf Club

Entry Fee: \$725

Palm Beach Gardens, FL

01

MAY







12

THANK YOU TO THE 2019 GOLF CHALLENGE SPONSORS

Bedminster

Bedminster, NJ

Entry Fee \$1,500

17

SEPT

Lake Forest, IL

Wine Spectator

Presented By



= PEBBLE 100 BEACH =



Playing Pebble

One of the beauties of Pebble Beach is that the average golfer can play it. As a resort course, it's technically open to anyone who has the means to afford it. But the price to play where Jack hit that famous 1-iron and Tiger tamed the field is more complicated than just fronting the considerable \$495 to \$525 greens fee.

To play Pebble Beach Golf Links, the 18 holes

where the U.S. Open will return for a sixth time in June, it helps to stay on property, and one night won't do it. Depending on the time of year, a two- or three-night minimum stay is required. Staying at the Lodge at Pebble Beach, the Inn at Spanish Bay or Casa Palmero near the Lodge allows for booking tee times far in advance (18 months out for the Lodge or the Inn at Spanish Bay, a year in advance for Casa Palmero). Those who don't stay, or only stay

one night, can book a tee time 24 hours in advance, and those slots fill up. Booking far ahead is key, and it's advised to reserve your caddy in advance as well. The fall tends to be the busiest time of the year, but Pebble is busy all year round, so it's wise to plan far ahead.

Several golf packages (which start north of \$2,000 per person) are available that include a round at Pebble and its sister courses Spyglass Hill or the Links at Spanish Bay.

But one incredibly attractive destination, The Lodge at Pebble Beach, has long held its own sensual allure. On the run-up to this year's Open, the Pebble Beach Co. hasn't stood still in reimagining its property. The Fairway One complex along the course's first hole opened in 2017 with 30 guest rooms and two four-bedroom residences, the Eastwood and Palmer cottages. The Visitor Center, opened last November, is a place where anyone can learn about the resort's history. You don't have to be a resort guest to visit, but you do have to be a multi-night resort guest to land the most coveted tee times. (See "Playing Pebble," above).

David Stivers, president of the Pebble Beach Co., knew he was in an enviable situation when he attended a board meeting 20 years ago, looking across the table at a host

of famous faces: Arnold Palmer, the head of Arnie's Army and one of the most storied golfers of all time. Clint Eastwood, Dirty Harry himself. Former Major League Baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth and his associate Dick Ferris. These men had led a group of investors who bought Pebble Beach in 1999.

"They bought it with one of the main goals to preserve this as an iconic treasure for America forever," says Stivers. The goal was



to ensure it never went to another ownership group. "That sentiment," Stivers adds, "holds true today."

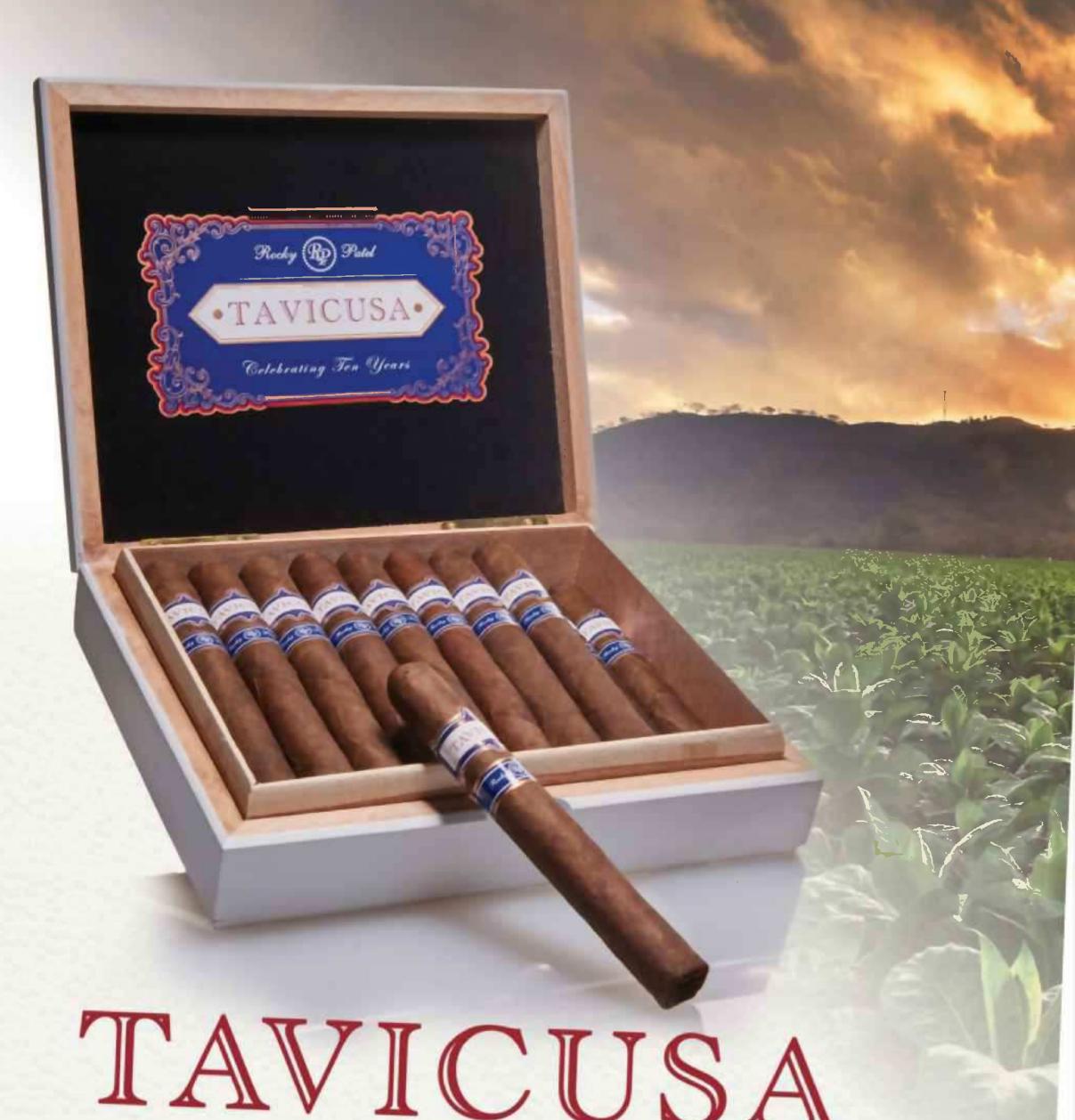
When it comes to change at Pebble Beach, caution and consideration are the bywords. "When we look at things like rooms renovation or adding a new facility like the visitors center, we are always looking at it through the lens of 'is this going to make Pebble Beach better? Is it consistent with what Pebble Beach stands for?'" says Stivers. "So when you look at things with that lens, it helps you stay grounded doing things for this company and this golf resort."

Singer/songwriter Darius Rucker, the frontman for Hootie and the Blowfish, is a regular in the AT&T Pro-Am. Waiting to hit his shot on the seventh tee this February, the iconic green framed by the ocean, Rucker

summed up the Pebble Beach experience.

"It's just a mind-blowing place to play," says Rucker. "It was so different from what you see on television. I mean it's beautiful, but when you get out here and see all those famous holes and the ocean, you look around and say my God!" •

Jeff Williams is a Cigar Aficionado *contributing editor.*



TAVICUSA

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF NICARAGUAN EXCELLENCE













uppose your rich uncle—or distant great grandfather—had been a liquor dealer with the foresight to lay in cases of Bourbon and rye just before Prohibition made them illegal to buy. And then imagine that almost 100 years later, hidden behind bookshelves in his house, you discovered his secret bank vault containing a huge part of that cache.

That was the windfall that greeted the heirs of the California builder, banker and liquor merchant Jean-Baptiste Leonis when his secret trove was discovered in 2017. Many would have dipped straight in, but instead these historic pours made it to Christie's auction house. What happened next made the market stand up and take notice. An auction of the goods in December saw most of the lots attract prices that stunned the experts. Nine quarts of Old Style Brookhill Sour Mash, distilled by J.H. Beam, an uncle of Jim Beam, sold for \$26,950. Three quarts of Old Crow went for \$9,188. Just two quarts of Old Taylor matched that price. The auction opened with five quarts of a bygone rye whiskey, named Hermitage, selling for \$22,050.

"We put some estimates on them that we thought were quite normal," says Chris Munro, the head of the spirits department at Christie's. "And then the market went crazy for them."

The market has been heating up for collectible whiskey for years, especially after spirits auctions were legalized in New York in 2007. But the hot action had long centered on Scotch, which for reasons of aging conditions can offer eye-popping age statements, reaching into six decades. Today, that ardor has spread to Bourbon as well—and not only those from the days before Prohibition.

Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve dominates the collectible Bourbon category, especially since it comes in age designations of 20 and 23 years (ancient by Bourbon standards) and has become all-but-impossible to find in retail shops, bars and cocktail lounges. When Pappy shows up at auction, the prices soar. A recent sale saw the gavel fall for \$1,872 and \$2,964, respectively, for Van Winkle 20- and 23-year-old Bourbons, whiskeys that would sell at retail for \$150 and \$250—if one could find them.

Daniel Lam of the Wine & Whisky Department of Bonhams' Hong Kong location, says that while historic Bourbons are still very important, sales of modern, hard-to-obtain bottles are up. And while you're unlikely to inherit a stash of old Bourbons, you'll find that major distilleries have limited-edition offerings (some only available at the source) that can anchor a Bourbon collection to give your guests a unique experience.

Pappy Van Winkle, bottled with the distinctive image of an old man in a suit and vest with eyeglasses, smoking a thin cigar, is the most celebrated Bourbon to be made at the Buffalo Trace distillery, in Frankfort, Kentucky. Operating since (at least) 1812 under various names, the facility holds some of the most storied brand names in Bourbon—including E.H. Taylor, George T. Stagg and William Larue Weller. It also never shuttered for Prohibition, as it was licensed to make the "medicinal purposes" bottlings that are now so collectible. Van Winkle is now made and stored here by contract. The brand originally was developed by procuring extra-old barrels that were unused by other distilleries, one of them presumably being Buffalo Trace.

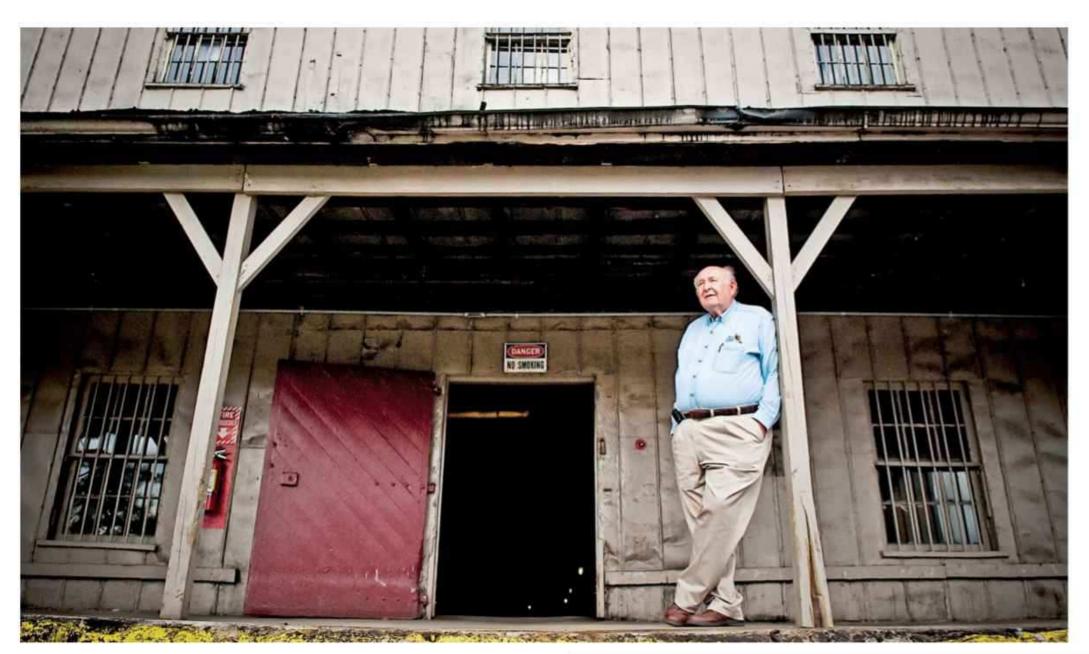
But Van Winkle is hardly the distillery's only notable product. The distiller has become well known for its experiments, among them the Single Oak Project, in which consumers voted on casks made from 96 oak trees of different origins and ring densities. With a retail price of \$46 a half-bottle, some of the singular expressions have been auctioned for nearly triple that amount.

Not as well known as Van Winkle, but able to tout similar age statements—and similar attention at auction—is Michter's. Its limited-edition bottles with age statements as old as 20 and 25 years are particularly collectible, reports Lam. A 20-year-old





A treasure-trove of Prohibition-era whiskey that sold for eye-popping prices in December.



Jimmy Russell (above) has been working at Wild Turkey for 65 years. At right, a lineup of once forgotten Bourbons, from the Orphan Barrel line.

Michter's sold for \$2,340 at auction in Hong Kong last August. But that pales in comparison to the brand's priciest offering—Michter's Celebration Sour Mash Whiskey, an extremely limited edition. The last edition, released in 2016, was priced at \$5,000 per bottle, with only 256 bottles released.

Back in the 1990s, Michters didn't have a distillery. Instead, it procured select casks at a time when Bourbon and rye were not in great demand. Soon, however, it began having its whiskey made by other distillers according to its specified recipes. In 2015, Michter's opened its own distillery in a converted GM auto parts plant in Louisville, where it controls all aspects of production. In a sense, the brand has ties to an old Pennsylvania rye distillery, dating from 1753, because whiskey of the same name had once been made at the site. (That facility closed in 1989, and the current iteration of Michter's was never made there.) The parent company of the new Michter's chose to move production to Kentucky because of the state's concentration of suppliers. As well as having state-of-the-art equipment, the distillery keys on using high-quality barrels and pays a premium for them.

The "lost barrel" story is one that is tossed around quite a bit in the whiskey world. It refers to a cask that was somehow mislaid in the warehouse and then discovered when it reached a ripe old age—presumably in peak condition. The Orphan Barrel project from spirits giant Diageo is a version on that, except that the barrels that created it were not lost, but more accurately abandoned. The whiskey's wending history begins in 1935 with the founding of the Stitzel-Weller distillery, just outside of Louisville.



Among other brands, it made Old Fitzgerald and W.L. Weller. The distillery was sold in 1972, and passed through a number of owners before being shuttered in the early 1990s, a time when Bourbon was underappreciated in the United States, and a time when old barrels of the whiskey were not the coveted items they are today. Diageo bought the property, and with it came a wealth of aged whiskey that had been left unwanted. In 2014, Diageo began bottling those old, forgotten barrels under the brand name Orphan Barrel. Limited releases were made under various subtitles with ages ranging from 19 to 28 years. Orphan Barrel Rhetoric, for example, has come out in several versions, each of them at least 20 years old. The Orphan Barrel 24 launched last summer, with a suggested retail price of \$130. A limited-edition collection of six Orphan Barrel bottles, representing 132 years combined age, was released in 2017 for \$1,500.

Another distillery that is drawing the attention of collectors is Louisville's Bernheim distillery, which has been owned by

Heaven Hill since 1999. Two special releases from Bernheim—Elijah Craig Barrel Proof (12 years) and Old Fitzgerald Bottled-in-Bond (13 years)—have become highly sought after. Heaven Hill 27, made at the company's old distillery, debuted at \$400, but has already sold at auction for double that, \$800.

Many date the trend of superpremium Bourbon to the early 1990s, when brands like Booker's, Knob Creek and Blanton's debuted with small batches and single barrels. But as early as the 1950s—long before the term "small batch" was coined—Maker's Mark bet that people would spend more for a better product. Besides refurbishing an antique distillery in a pastoral location, the company introduced a wheat recipe and intensely rotated casks in the warehouse for uniform aging. For decades, Maker's





Departed legends Elmer T. Lee (above) and Parker Beam (right) saw the ups and downs of Bourbon.

had only one standard release in their portfolio, except for a high-strength version (95 proof) available only in Asia, which draws auction interest. Today, customers can buy a cask strength version (108–114 proof, \$50) and retailers have the option of the Private Select program, whereby retailers buy an entire barrel (\$13,000) at cask strength and then customize finishing from a selection of five stave wood types. The per bottle suggested retail price is \$70.

For Jim Beam, the world's largest Bourbon distillery, rotating barrels throughout the warehouses is impractical. After all, they add a half million casks a year to their inventory, storing close to 1.9 million at any time. So years ago when distilling legend Booker Noe was asked to come up with superpremium products, he simply set out to find the warehouse crannies that aged the best liquor. He did this by locating the hoses that workers had hidden to sneak sips out of the best casks: a crude, but effective, focus group. It turned out they were stored mainly in the center of north-facing warehouses. He passed the knowledge to his son, Fred, who is now master distiller in charge of picking those "honey barrels." The company now annually adds further limited releases of uncut and unfiltered Bourbon, called Booker's Batch Collection. There's also a market for collecting vintage Jim Beam decanters that were made in the shape of cars and trains and even Elvis. But those who take the Jim Beam American Stillhouse tour,

representing a bit of brand history that's not to be overlooked, can buy a 375-mm bottle of Old Tub, a tribute to a pre-Prohibition brand that is only available in the visitor's center.

A handful of legendary master distillers like Noe, Parker Beam at Heaven Hill and Elmer T. Lee at Buffalo Trace acted as links to the time when Bourbon was king. The men also lived through the spirit's down times, which started in the 1970s, and the whiskey's resurgence in the 1990s. Still reminding us of that heritage is Jimmy Russell at Wild Turkey. As much as his friend Booker was an outsized personality, Russell is a beatific Buddha overlooking his domain even as he chalks up his 65th (and counting) year at the same distillery where he started working as a 17-year-old. Never flashy, but always amicable, he and his son Eddie are now

co-master distillers. Some of their most collectible productions include the Master's Keep series (\$150). It currently numbers three releases, the latest version of which is a nod not only to Jimmy's long career, but his long championing of the 101 proof standard that so many of his whiskeys have upheld. The second, called Decades, showcases Eddie Russell's skill with a melding of whiskeys between 10 and 20 years old.

The Four Roses distillery in nearby Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, possesses a long history that was long obscured. When Seagram's bought the plant in the 1940s, it ceased selling its standout straight Bourbon whiskey in the United States, replacing it with a subpar blend. In the 1990s, it resumed sale in small allotments in Kentucky, but the Bourbon

was still by definition a collectible. Finally, the Japanese brewery Kirin bought the distillery and started widespread sales in America. The whiskeys are delicious, but there's one collectible iteration that's particularly hard to get: the barrel-strength Four Roses Single Barrel Private Selection, which is something that can only be bought at the distillery store.

Woodford Reserve is made at the same site where the sourmash process was pioneered, as the distillery has roots that reach far back into the history of Bourbon. The present owner is still innovating, using three copper pot stills, the kind of thing you expect from Scottish single-malt whisky makers, not Bourbon men. Woodford's think-outside-the-box culture has done nothing but grow, and there's a particularly collectible whiskey produced by its sister brand Old Forester in Louisville. (Both companies are owned by spirits giant Brown-Forman.) Once a year, Old Forester remembers the founder George Garvin Brown with its Birthday Bourbon, a melding of casks distilled and barreled on one particular day. Obviously, that condition makes it a highly limited release. And while this whiskey sells for a relatively affordable \$60 a bottle upon release, a set of three from separate years recently sold at auction for the considerable sum of \$2,500.

As it turns out maybe you don't need a rich uncle to get your hands on unique Bourbon. ❖



Tickets Are Now on Sale!

Month America The Leading Whisky Festival Vin North America

The Wine Spectator California Scholarship Foundation presents:

SAN FRANCISCO

October 4, 2019

NEW YORK

December 3, 2019



Enjoy a night of good whiskies, good food and good friends at WhiskyFest.

- Taste from a selection of more than 350 whiskies from around the world.
- Meet the distillers and master blenders.
- Attend in-depth seminars by whisky experts—no additional cost!
- Enjoy a gourmet buffet all evening.
- Special Bonus: Receive a one-year subscription to Whisky Advocate magazine*.

Great Gift Idea for Father's Day

Sponsored by Whisky

Over 350 whiskies will be poured. It's a great time to find a new favorite!

1000 Stories

1792

A.D. Laws

A. Smith Bowman

Ardbeg

Arran

Balblair

The Balvenie

Blackened American

Blanton's

Blood Oath

Bowmore

Brenne

Bruichladdich

Buffalo Trace

Bushmills

Compass Box

David Nicholson

Reserve

Dewar's

Dingle Distillery

Eagle Rare

Elijah Craig

Few Spirits

Four Roses

Glen Grant

Glenfiddich

The Glenlivet

Glenmorangie

Gooderham & Worts

Hakushu

Hatozaki

Heaven Hill

Heaven's Door

Henry McKenna

High West

Hillrock Estate

Hotaling & Co.

J.P. Wiser's

Jack Daniel's

Jim Beam

Johnnie Walker

Kavalan

Kilbeggan

Knappogue Castle

Laphroaig

Lot 40

Larceny

Maker's Mark

Michter's

Mossburn

Nikka

Old Ezra

Old Fitzgerald

Old Pulteney

Old Rip Van Winkle

Pappy Van Winkle

Parker's

Paul John

Pike Creek

Pikesville

Readbreast

The Real McCoy

Rebel Yell

Russell's Reserve

Sagamore Spirit

Sazerac

The Sexton

Speyburn

Stagg Jr.

Stranahan's

Talisker

Taylor

Templeton Rye

Thomas Handy Rye

Tincup

Tomatin

Tyrconnell

Weller

Westland

Wheatley Vodka

WhistlePig

Widow Jane

Wild Turkey

Woodford Reserve

Yamazaki

Yellowstone



Whisky list is subject to change. Not all whiskies available in all cities.

Take Advantage of Early Bird Prices Order Tickets at WhiskyFest.com





Pelota in the Sun

Baseball is the supreme sport in the Dominican Republic, and the small country has created more major leaguers than any nation outside the United States

BY KENNETH SHOULER

he sun beats down, punishing green and brown ballfields. The image is every bit as familiar as the strains of meringue and salsa rising from the dusty alleys. It is said that life in the Dominican Republic follows four principles: God, country, liberty and baseball. Not necessarily in that order. *Pelota*, another word for "baseball," challenges that pecking order every month of the year.

Long after Major League Baseball cedes its summer dominance to brown leaves and chilled air, the crack of ball meeting ash echoes across the verdant fields of this Caribbean country. Some say baseball is in the blood of Dominicans, who may start playing at the age of three.

José Ramírez recalls his youth. "This is a juice box," he says, holding up a small, waxy carton. "After we drank all the juice, we would fold it tightly and use it as a ball to play." A piece of wood the width of a broom handle was secured as a bat. Born in the southern region of Baní, Ramírez made his major league debut in 2013, at the age of 20, and has been a Cleveland Indian ever since. His rise has been meteoric. The brawny, 5'9" third baseman has been an All-Star twice and has hit more







home runs and driven in more runs each season than he did the one before. When he returns to his hometown, he is trailed through his old streets by children, an inspiration for Dominicans seeking fame and fortune.

Dominican baseball is a tale of high hopes. Teenage prospects are signed to one of 30 "academies," one for each major league team, and hone their talents longing to catch the eye of scouts. Baseball has been called a game of failure; even the immortal players fail to get a hit seven out of every 10 at bats. Here, it's a different degree of failure: just two percent of all players signed to an academy will reach the majors.

This country of just 10.8 million residents is second only to the U.S. in creating professional ballplayers. All told, more than 700 players from the Dominican Republic have played Major League Baseball. And with 102 players born in the Dominican Republic

"All we wanted to do was play ball. We made our own bats with branches. For gloves, we would take a piece of canvas and then sew up the sides."

-Juan Marichal

playing on major league teams this year, roughly 10 percent of current major league players are Dominican. One city alone, San Pedro de Macorís, known as "the Cradle of Shortstops," has produced 76 major leaguers. Success stories abound, and stars with Dominican heritage have been playing in the majors for more than 50 years, from Juan Marichal to Pedro Martínez, Vladimir Guerrero to Albert Pujols, Adrián Beltre and so many more.

Baseball was first played in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo in June 1891, when Cuban brothers Ignacio and Ubaldo Aloma organized two teams. In 1956, Osvaldo Virgil (known better as "Ozzie"), a native of Monte Cristi and a graduate of DeWitt

Clinton High School in the Bronx, became the first Dominican player to sport a major league uniform when he debuted for the New York Giants at the age of 24. The journeyman third baseman would play for five teams in an undistinguished, nine-year career.

The next native of note so outshone the rest that he is still revered as "The Dominican Dandy." Growing up on a farm in Laguna Verde, then a city of about 450 people, Juan Marichal recalls: "All we wanted to do was play ball. We made our own bats with branches that we cut from the gaussia tree and dried in the sun. For gloves, we would take a piece of canvas, the kind of stuff they used to cover trucks, and fold it around a piece of cardboard and then sew up the sides. And for balls, we would get some golf balls from the golf course at Manzanillo and wrap nylon stocking or tape around them, and then take them to the shoemaker who would sew a leather cover around them."

Known for his high leg kick and a wide palette of pitches and speeds, Marichal tossed a one-hitter in his debut with San Francisco against Philadelphia on July 19, 1960. The Giants rewarded him with a generous contract for \$12,000 the next year. Over a decade rich in pitching, Marichal won 191 games, more than any hurler in the 1960s.

A few years later, a singular event occurred. On September 15, 1963, San Francisco's Felipe Alou, who hailed from Bajos de Haina, was playing right field with future Hall of Famers Willie McCovey in left and Willie Mays in center. When the Giants scored five runs to take an 8-3 lead, manager Alvin Dark substituted Felipe's younger brother Jesus for McCovey. After the Giants scored four more to mount a 12-3 lead, Dark replaced Mays in center with Felipe's other younger brother Matty. "It was history," Mays said. The image staggers the mind still: three brothers who once slept side by side in a 15-by-15-foot shack now stood side by side in a major league outfield for the defending National League champions.

The baseball success stories from the Dominican Republic run the gamut from legendary to average, with many more to come. ��





BIG SMOKE LAS VEGAS WEEKEND

THE MIRAGE

November 15-17, 2019

YES YOU CAN SMOKEL







The Big Smoke weekend is a jam-packed cigar experience!
The three-day event includes two Big Smoke evenings featuring a fantastic line-up of premium cigars to collect and enjoy, plus exciting daytime seminars with Cigar Aficionado editors and renowned cigarmakers.

TICKETS ON SALE NOW AT LASVEGASBIGSMOKE.COM

Ultimate Weekend for Cigar Lovers

ALL ACCESS PACKAGE

Daytime Sit-Down Seminars + 2 Big Smoke Evenings (VIP)

\$875

BEST BUY

WEEKEND PACKAGE

Daytime Sit-Down Seminars + 1 Big Smoke Evening (VIP)

\$675

BIG SMOKE EVENINGS

VIP Admission **\$375**General Admission **\$325**







BIG SMOKE EVENINGS November 15th and November 16th

5:30-9:30 PM

Join us for one (or two!) Big Smoke Evening events in the Mirage Event center. Enjoy collecting 30+ premium cigars, sipping cocktails, spirits and beer, mingling with cigarmakers and smoking with friends. Cigar Aficionado canvas tote bag included with every ticket!

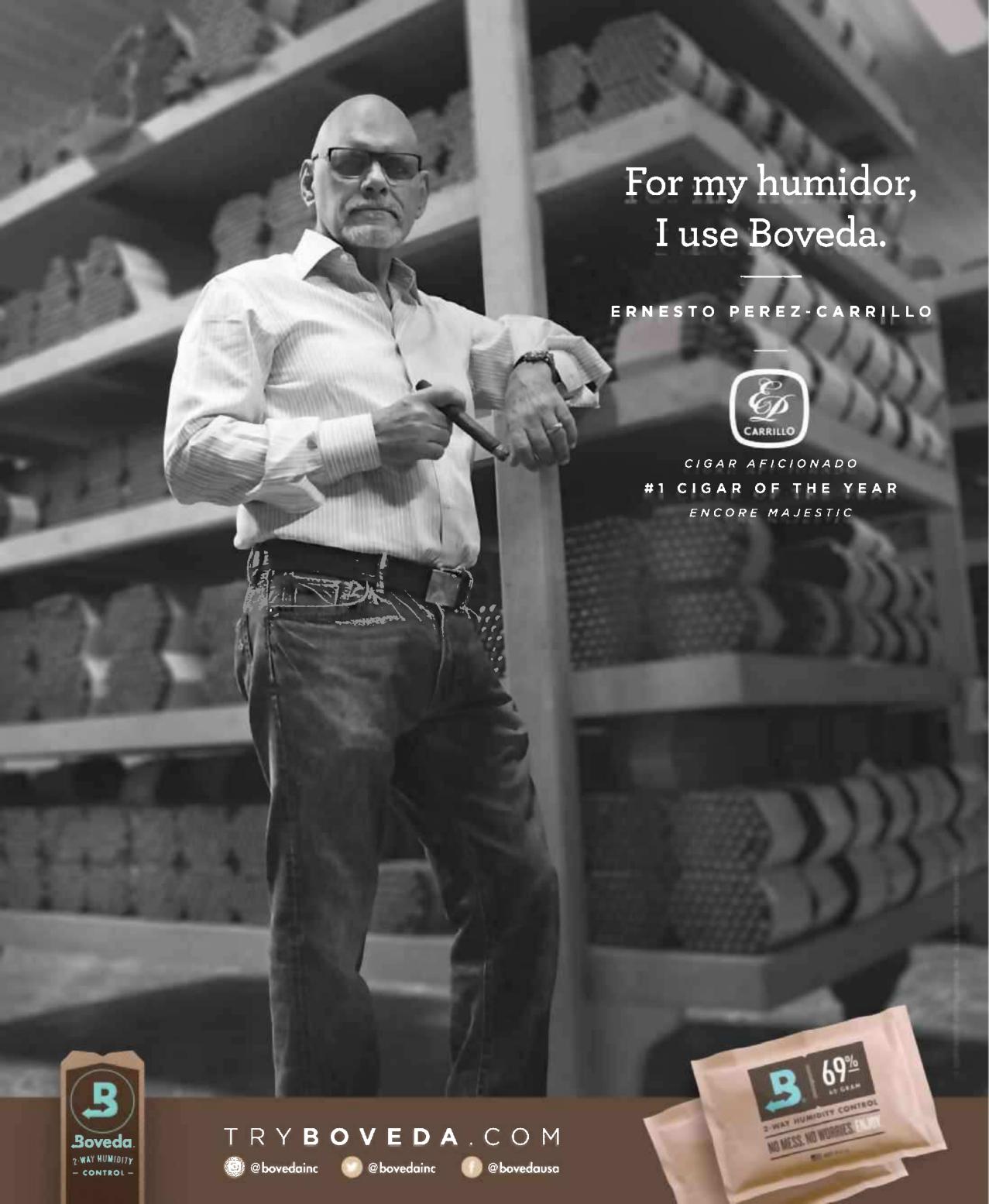
CIGAR SEMINARS November 16th and November 17th

Enjoy two days of sit-down cigar and tobacco related seminars featuring Cigar Aficionado's editors and renowned cigarmakers from across the industry. Seminars include the Top 3 Cigars of 2018, cigar and spirit pairings and more!

For hotel information and to purchase tickets, visit

LASVEGASBIGSMOKE.COM

Seminar Program and 2019 Cigar List Coming Soon



WHATIS AVAXHOME?

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: band new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media rotect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages Brand new content One site



We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu



churchills_

The La Flor Dominicana 1994 Mambo scored 91 points and shows how versatile a Mexican wrapper can be. While it's common to see Mexican wrapper blended with Nicaraguan tobacco, brand-owner Litto Gomez put one around an all-Dominican blend, and the result was fantastic. The year 1994 commemorates the year Gomez began making cigars. Three cigars scored 90 points, and stylistically, they couldn't be more different. The Kristoff Connecticut Churchill is covered in an Ecuador Connecticut wrapper while the New World Cameroon Selection Churchill is wrapped in a leaf of Cameroon. Always a classic, the Cuban Romeo y Julieta Churchill is emblematic of the size.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA FLOR DOMINICANA 1994 MAMBO

Large and imposing with an even draw and burn, this cigar forms a sturdy ash. Initial notes of earth and minerals become more complex with leather, almonds and chocolate-covered raisins.

U.S.: \$8.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

KRISTOFF CONNECTICUT CHURCHILL

A tan Churchill with a closed foot and knotted pigtail cap. First puffs are creamy, sweet and nutty like a pecan sandie cookie. Hints of wood and vanilla support the core of nutty sweetness.

U.S.: \$8.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

NEW WORLD CAMEROON SELECTION CHURCHILL

This long, box-pressed cigar is draped in a toothy cover leaf. Its sweet and spicy smoke takes on pleasant notes of oak and orange peel.

U.S.: \$6.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA and a saf BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2017 U.S.: N/A

ROMEO Y JULIETA CHURCHILL

Tan and box-pressed with a flat head and four-seam cap. Though the draw is firm, it still delivers plenty of toasty, nutty smoke, taking on a rich cappuccino quality and a saffron finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £28.80 STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PERDOMO RESERVE CHAMPAGNE NOIR CHURCHILL

A large cigar whose even draw and burn produces a solid ash. Woody and minty at first, the smoke becomes leathery, carrying notes of nougat and toast.

U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



U.S.A.

RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

TATUAJE RESERVA SW

This long, oily and reddish-brown cigar is attractive, with a leathery, oaky core. The smoke also has a sweeter side, with pleasant touches of cocoa and caramel on the palate. The finish is slightly dry.

U.S.: \$13.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: INDONESIA** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ARCHETYPE AXIS MUNDI CHURCHILL

This is an exceptionally nutty smoke, which has notes of almonds and cashews as it burns. The finish is sweet, with creamy, nougat notes and a faint touch of mint. U.S.: \$14.09 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA, BRAZIL BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO WRAPPER: MEXICO

UNDERCROWN CHURCHILL

An inky-black Churchill that smokes evenly, producing a fine ash. Heavy notes of earth and bitter cocoa are met with hints of coffee and licorice.

U.S.: \$9.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

FONSECA VINTAGE CHURCHILL

This large, golden-brown Churchill draws well offering a creamy smoke. There are faint notes of nuts, wood and orange on the palate, concluding with a dry finish. U.S.: \$9.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: ECUADOR** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

GILBERTO OLIVA RESERVA 7X50

The nutty, woody smoke of this Churchill has some complexity, also showcasing some sweet and herbal undertones. The finish is slightly muddled. U.S.: \$6.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA **BINDER: MEXICO** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

H. UPMANN BY AJ FERNANDEZ CHURCHILL

A tangy, woody smoke with some notes of dried apple and a gummy finish. It's a large Churchill that draws and burns fairly evenly.

U.S.: \$8.97 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PLASENCIA RESERVA ORIGINAL CHURCHILL

Dark and oily with a rustic, veiny wrapper. There's a bit of sweetness here redolent of pipe tobacco along with some earth and vanilla notes, but the saccharine finish affected the score.

U.S.: \$19.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA

LA GLORIA CUBANA CHURCHILL

The tight draw of this Churchill produces a rather thin smoke that starts sour before picking up a faint raisin sweetness. It becomes overwhelmingly earthy and piney. WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$7.19 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: CAMEROON WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ENCLAVE CHURCHILL

A lumpy, uneven Churchill covered in a rough wrapper and uncut foot. It burns rather hot, so any initial notes of woody and fresh tobacco become charry and dry. U.S.: \$7.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

Though it seems the corona size is breaking away from the mainstream more and more each year, there are still plenty of great coronas produced and circulated in the market. The Joya Silver Corona is a perfect example. It scored 92 points and is a traditional size made by a traditional factory. Joya de Nicaragua is the oldest manufacturer of handmade cigars in Nicaragua. It tied with La Relatos The First, a slim smoke owned by Warped Cigars and produced in Nicaragua at the Aganorsa Leaf factory (formerly known as TABSA). Cuba consistently proves itself to be quite adept at crafting coronas, as small cigars from this country tend to score well in the pages of this magazine. Both the H. Upmann Corona Major and the Punch Royal Coronation (packed in tubos) scored 91 points.



NICARAGUA

JOYA SILVER CORONA

92

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: MEXICO WRAPPER: ECUADOR

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 6"

Crafted with a three-seam cap, this box-pressed cigar burns evenly. Its earthy character is enlivened by hearty impressions of fruit, roasted nuts and coffee bean. U.S.: \$6.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA RELATOS THE FIRST

Beautifully made with a medium claro wrapper and a multi-seamed cap. This thin cigar burns evenly with initial leathery, floral impressions that show notes of

U.S.: \$9.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 5 3/4"

BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2014

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 6"

H. UPMANN CORONA MAJOR (TUBO)

CUBA RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/4"

cinnamon, nuts and vanilla bean.

A reddish-brown corona with a flat head and slightly firm draw. The smoke is sweet and nutty, showing notes of honey and cherry cordial, balanced by leather and a spicy hint of dried red pepper.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.30 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



CUBA

FILLER: CUBA **BINDER: CUBA**

WRAPPER: CUBA

PUNCH ROYAL CORONATION (TUBO)

Sweet and floral with plenty of leathery undertones and

a long, nut-and-honey finish. The wrapper is a perfect reddish shade of colorado.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £19.30 STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: HONDURAS

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI HABANO

LONSDALE DELUXE

The draw of this long, thin cigar is superb, the burn clean and even. Notes of cedar and earth are met with a pistachio nuttiness, black pepper and a dark toast finish. U.S.: \$9.28 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GALERA HABANO BONCHERO

Dark and oily, this corona draws evenly with perfect combustion. It starts out floral and nutty before showing an earthier side with notes of leather and stony flint. A fruity note of dried peach sets up the woody finish.

U.S.: \$5.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., ECUADOR BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PAUL GARMIRIAN GOURMET RESERVA EXCLUSIVE CORONA

Perfect combustion and an even draw combine for a bright, vibrant smoke full of earthy mineral notes, a burst of orange citrus and a finish of honey and cedar.

U.S.: \$10.45 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 45 LENGTH: 5 1/4"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE CUBAN CORONA

Though slightly greenish in appearance, this is a creamy cigar with notes of caramel, coffee and a rustic, earthy finish. It draws and burns evenly.

U.S.: \$5.36 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 5 5/8" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF GRAND CRU NO. 2

A well-made corona with a lush, open draw that delivers a woody, tangy smoke redolent of dried orange peel. Hints of nutmeg and baking spices also come through.

U.S.: \$17.50 U.K.: £25.00 STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ASHTON AGED MADURO NO. 20

A black, oily cigar that draws and burns evenly, producing a flaky ash. It's a mostly oaky, earthy smoke that hints at minerals and sweet vanilla.

U.S.: \$9.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA AURORA 107 CORONA

Made with a dark wrapper, this corona delivers an earthy smoke with notes of roasted coffee bean and an herbal finish.

U.S.: \$6.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES CORONA NATURAL

Slim and box-pressed with a flat head. It's an inconsistent smoke that starts dry and leafy before revealing hints of oak and cashew and an earthy finish.

U.S.: \$10.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

corona gordas_

Three cigars in this tasting of toros really got our attention, scoring a very impressive 93 points. All of them showed not only balance and vibrancy, but unique style. Take, for example, the complex spiciness of the Aladino Toro. Made in Honduras by Julio Eiroa, it displayed an entire spice cabinet worth of flavors in a single puff. And where the Honduran Gran Habano La Conquista scored 93 points for its polished elegance and consistent balance, the Punch Diablo's smoke was so devilishly rich, each puff was like sinking your teeth into a nutty block of fudge. The brand is made in Nicaragua by A.J. Fernandez for General Cigar and is billed as General's most full-bodied Punch to date.



HONDURAS

ALADINO TORO

93

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: HONDURAS **BINDER: HONDURAS** WRAPPER: HONDURAS

The warm, complex stew of mideastern spices coming from this cigar contradicts its dullish, matte wrapper. Each puff is loaded with notes of bay leaf, clove, cinnamon and cardamom atop a peppery, earthy core. U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



HONDURAS

GRAN HABANO LA CONQUISTA GRAN ROBUSTO

FILLER: NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA, COLOMBIA BINDER: NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"

There's a coppery gleam to this oily cigar, whose cedary, nutty core is beautifully accented by spicy notes of caraway seed, cinnamon and graham cracker. U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

93



NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PUNCH DIABLO SCAMP

Every puff of this dark cigar gives the sensation of biting

93

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6 1/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF WRAPPER: ECUADOR

U.S.: \$7.19 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

EASTERN STANDARD THE CYPRUS ROOM

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR

Complex layers of chocolate, rye bread and nuts play off the earthy, barnyard core of this pigtailed toro, which draws and burns evenly.

into a piece of chocolate fudge, studded with nuts, espresso beans and toasted coconut. Hints of caramel

and earth make this smoke a sublimely rich experience.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

PUNCH PUNCH 48

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2016

The floral, chocolatey smoke of this well-made cigar shows nuanced impressions of graham cracker, cinnamon and a hint of leather. Rich and complex. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £20.25 STRENGTH: Medium



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/2"

FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2017

SAINT LUIS REY HERFING EXCLUSIVO MEDIO ORIENTE

92

wood with spicier touches of cardamom and cumin. Sweet hints of vanilla and butterscotch also emerge. U.S.: N/A LEBANON: \$17.00 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

A hearty cigar that shows bold notes of leather and



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: COSTA RICA

ROCKY PATEL OLDE WORLD RESERVE MADURO TORO

Light touches of earth and black pepper usher in a richer, sweeter smoke profoundly redolent of cocoa powder. The salted-caramel finish adds elegance to the cocoa powder core.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium





BAHAMAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, GREECE,
HONDURAS, COSTA RICA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

GRAYCLIFF CRYSTAL TORO

Reddish brown with healthy coloring, this toro ties together notes of molasses, vanilla and spicy earth with a creamy smoke that remains silky and substantial.

U.S.: \$24.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA,
BRAZIL

BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

NESTOR MIRANDA COLLECTION HABANO CORONA GORDA

Though a bit lumpy to the touch, this cigar offers a rich, nutty smoke with roasted coffee bean notes and slight accents of earth and minerals.

U.S.: \$8.65 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO

COHIBA MACASSAR TORO GRANDE

The open draw of this oily toro delivers an herbal, woody smoke that leaves touches of black pepper, fruit and cocoa on the palate.

U.S.: \$24.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 7/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: OCTOBER 2018

DIPLOMATICOS AMMUNITION EXCLUSIVO PHOENICIA

The draw on this fat toro is notably firm, but the burn is even throughout. It's a toasty, oaky smoke with a salt-and-pepper quality, though the finish is muted.

U.S.: N/A LEBANON: \$22.00 STRENGTH: Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER NO. 3 CREMA

Some unusually sharp veins protrude from the wrapper of this oily cigar, which is full of wood, leather and black pepper though a charry finish affected the score.

U.S.: \$11.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

87



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

THE OSCAR HABANO TORO

The bold and prevalent earthy notes of this dark smoke are as big as the beefy toro itself, though its considerable earthiness loses intensity, becoming powdery and herbal.

U.S.: \$11.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

FLORES Y RODRIGUEZ CONNECTICUT VALLEY RESERVE GRAN TORO

A blackish toro with a veiny wrapper. Notes of licorice and anise turn oaky before the flinty finish, but the persistent charry aftertaste of burnt wood hurt the score.

U.S.: \$18.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

figurados_

Three smokes in this category of shaped cigars scored 90 points or higher, with two of them coming from the same factory. The Arturo Fuente Don Carlos No. 2 scored 91 points. The thick torpedo is made in the Dominican Republic and is notable for its Cameroon wrapper. Though Cameroon wrapper can sometimes appear coarse and grayish, don't let the rough appearance fool you. When blended properly, this exotic cover leaf can be quite delicious and Fuente brings Cameroon to its potential with an all-Dominican core. When the Cuban Montecristo Petit No. 2 came out in 2013, it was intended to be a shorter version of the classic No. 2, a much longer pirámide. Now that a number of years have passed, it might be time to take this cigar at face value, rather than comparing it to its older sibling. The Montecristo Petit No. 2 scored 91 points, which means that this Cuban belicoso can surely stand on its own. The Diamond Crown Julius Caeser Pyramid scored 90 points, and is also made at the Fuente factory in the Dominican Republic. The line is owned by the J.C. Newman Cigar Co. and named after its founder.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 55 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE DON CARLOS NO. 2

Though the wrapper is a bit splotchy and coarse, this is a delicious cigar that leaves the oaky qualities of a rum barrel, along with hints of nutmeg, cinnamon and cocoa.

U.S.: \$12.85 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2015

MONTECRISTO PETIT NO. 2

A mini torpedo that smokes fairly well. Light notes of wood and sweet tea become stronger with toast, graham cracker and a clear, honey-like finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £22.60 STRENGTH: Medium

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DIAMOND CROWN JULIUS CAESERPYRAMID

Covered in a gleaming, oily wrapper, this torpedo shows sweet notes of cocoa and caramel buttressed by a core of coffee bean and wood.

U.S.: \$18.45 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 3/4" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: HONDURAS, INDONESIA WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY TEMPUS NATURAL MAGISTRI

An alluring shade of chocolate brown, this double-tapered figurado draws and burns evenly despite its curves and tapers. Peppery at first, the cigar becomes quite woody with hints of coffee.

U.S.: \$10.70 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

L'ATELIER SELECTION SPÉCIALE LAT TORPEDO

Spicy black pepper notes set the tone for this solidly rolled torpedo. It takes on hints of coffee and licorice before a notably herbal finish.

U.S.: \$9.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VEGA MAGNA BELICOSO

This long, rustic looking figurado burns unevenly, but delivers fruity and earthy impressions tied together with hints of cocoa powder and cedar.

U.S.: \$21.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium





CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JUNE 2015

DIPLOMATICOS NO. 2

A lightly hued torpedo with a blistery burn. Though it starts out thin and grassy, flavors become more substantial warming to show nutty notes of almond.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £23.40 STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

87



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: HONDURAS

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

PADILLA MIAMI 8&11 TORPEDO

First puffs of this long torpedo leave a charred sensation on the palate with notes of burnt wood, but the charriness dissipates to show spice and leather.

U.S.: \$14.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/8"

FILLER: HONDURAS

BINDER: HONDURAS

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

CAMACHO COROJO FIGURADO

There are many soft spots up and down this belicoso, which burns unevenly. Initial notes of wood, spice and chocolate are offset by a chalky, eucalyptus finish.

U.S.: \$9.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 6 1/4"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2016

HOYO DE MONTERREY ELEGANTES

A long, thin double figurado with pointy tapers and a veiny wrapper. It's a one-dimensional smoke showing woody, floral notes, a touch of nuttiness and a papery finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £20.70 STRENGTH: Medium

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., BRAZIL,
NICARAGUA, PERU
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

LA AURORA PREFERIDOS 1903 EDITION PLATINUM NO. 2 (TUBO)

With its tapered ends and bulbous midsection, this cigar represents the classic perfecto. It's earthy and leathery with some black pepper, but lacking sweetness. The uneven burn corrects itself.

U.S.: \$20.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 55 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LIBERATION BY HAMLET TORO

A fat cigar with a belicoso head and shaggy foot. Initial elements of earth and wood are overpowered by a charry, slightly metallic aftertaste.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$11.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SAN CRISTOBAL ELEGANCIA PYRAMID

This is an herbal, woody torpedo with notes of bread and cereal that leave the palate a bit dry with a chalky finish.

U.S.: \$7.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

lonsdales_

Sometimes the smoke of a cigar has the uncanny ability to mimic other pleasant gustatory experiences so well, the cigar is actually transporting. This was the case for the Room101 Farce It Is a Lonsdale, which scored 94 points. Every puff of this slender cigar recalls one comforting food memory or aroma after the next in a warm and resonant way. If the quirky name has you scratching your head, it's because it came from the creative mind of Matt Booth who owns the brand and brings a bit of madcap humor into the cigar industry. Made with a five-country blend, the cigar is rolled in the Dominican Republic at the William Ventura factory. Two cigars scored 92 points, one from Nicaragua and the other from the United States. Black Label Trading Co. is a small company headed by husband-and-wife team James and Angela Brown. They have their Last Rites brand made in Nicaragua at a little-known factory called Oveja Negra. The Cornelius & Anthony Cornelius brand is produced in Miami's Little Havana neighborhood at the El Titan de Bronze factory. It's the most expensive cigar in the category due to the high cost of U.S. labor.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF, DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, ECUADOR BINDER: INDONESIA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROOM101 FARCE IT IS A LONSDALE

Smoking this cigar is like chewing on a ginger molasses cookie, as dense notes of sweet spice slather the palate with each puff. There's plenty of oaky vanilla and leather to this cigar, which has a finish of maple-cured bacon.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

94



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS BINDER: HONDURAS WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BLACK LABEL TRADING CO. LAST RITES PETITE LANCERO

The smoke from this dark, skinny cigar layers the palate with rich notes of chocolate and earth before the nutty finish. Some pleasing licorice impressions also emerge.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

92



U.S.A.

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY CORNELIUS LONSDALE

The dense, chewy smoke of this lonsdale hits the palate squarely with an earthy, nuttiness before blossoming to show a spicy array of saffron, cardamom, cocoa and ground cloves.

U.S.: \$13.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6 7/8" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN AMBASSADOR MADURO

Thin and dark, this rustic-looking cigar is slightly box pressed with tasty, straightforward notes of leather, wood, chocolate and caramel.

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA U.S.: \$5.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 41 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY COYOL PETIT LANCERO

Topped with a pigtail cap, this long, thin cigar has a lush, open draw. It starts salty and earthy, taking on some chocolate sweetness and a note of black pepper.

U.S.: \$7.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 61/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ILLUSIONE F9

Topped with a four-seam cap, this dark and streaky lonsdale draws and burns evenly. It starts out with light notes of black tea and cedar but picks up to show a warm nuttiness and spicy ginger finish.

U.S.: \$9.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 65/8" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

MONTECRISTO CLASSIC ESPECIAL NO. 1

The draw of this golden-brown lonsdale is full, if not a bit firm, but offers a woody smoke tangy with minerals and citrus. Some bready, toasty notes of biscuit also come through before a graham cracker finish.

U.S.: \$11.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 65/8" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO WHITE ESPECIAL NO. 1

There's a tangy, citrus acidity to this lonsdale, balanced by floral hints of lavender and a cedar-like finish.

U.S.: \$10.79 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., MEXICO **BINDER: MEXICO** WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

MACANUDO CAFÉ

BARON DE ROTHSCHILD

Tan and streaky, this slender smoke is dry and grassy with floral notes and a short, almond finish. It draws and burns evenly.

U.S.: \$8.29 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

OLIVA CONNECTICUT RESERVE LONSDALE

Tasters encountered inconsistencies on the draw and burn of this yellowish lonsdale. Initial puffs are woody and herbal with hints of maple and brown sugar overwhelmed by a very grassy finish.

U.S.: \$6.86 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: ECUADOR THE GRIFFIN'S NO. 200

Pale and veiny, this thin cigar draws evenly showing a woody smoke with hints of lemon peel, but the finish is dry and chalky.

U.S.: \$11.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP.

ARTURO FUENTE

SPANISH LONSDALE MADURO

The draw of this rustic-looking cigar is notably firm, but manages to impart a woody smoke with hints of leather WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF and nougat. The finish tastes earthy and charred. U.S.: \$5.36 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 6 3/4" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: INDONESIA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VILLIGER LA FLOR DE YNCLAN LANCERO ESPECIAL

Notes of walnut, earth and orange peel struggle to emerge from this long, thin cigar's overwhelming mustiness. The cigar is topped with a pigtail cap. U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

robustos_

Out of the 14 cigars in this robusto category, more than half of them scored 90 points or higher. That's a tremendous showing for one of the country's most popular sizes. The standouts in this stellar lineup of robustos scored 92 points—one a classic Cuban and the other a new Nicaraguan. The Aging Room Quattro Nicaragua Espressivo is made by A.J. Fernandez (though his name does not appear in any of the branding), and contains only Nicaraguan tobacco. Quattro refers to the four-sided, box-pressed shape of the cigar. The Partagás Serie D No. 4 is one of Cuba's quintessential robustos, popular with fans of stronger Cuban cigars. It's also Cuba's best-selling smoke.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

AGING ROOM QUATTRO NICARAGUA ESPRESSIVO

Darkly-hued and box-pressed, this well-made robusto burns evenly. Notes of chocolate and coffee bean are balanced by subtle intonations of coconut and herbs.

U.S.: \$10.65 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JUNE 2017

BA PARTAGÁS SERIE D NO. 4

Opulent and rich from the first puff, this reddish-brown robusto leans earthy and strong with a bold, coffee-like character, but is balanced by notes of salted peanuts, honey and wood.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £21.80 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

601 BLUE LABEL MADURO ROBUSTO

Each puff of this dark robusto is a tasty balance of coffee, earth, raisins and licorice, which harmonize to a long, rich finish. The draw and burn are perfect throughout.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2014

MONTECRISTO OPEN MASTER

Covered in a medium-claro wrapper, this robusto shows the spicy tanginess of lemon peel, pickled ginger and lavender. The finish is floral with a bit of sweet graham cracker.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £23.10 STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

TIMELESS PANAMERICANA EPICURE

The spicy, earthy smoke of this dark robusto takes on notes of chocolate, black pepper and spicy cinnamon before a sweet, honey-like finish.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$11.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

VIAJE EXCLUSIVO NICARAGUA LEADEDROBUSTO

Topped with a three-seam cap, this well-made cigar burns evenly. Notes of cocoa powder, nuts and wood have the savory underpinnings of leather, leading to a rum-barrel finish.

U.S.: \$9.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: HONDURAS
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

EIROA 50X5

The matte wrapper of this slightly box-pressed cigar lacks oils, but the cigar delivers a nutty, earthy smoke full of almond and mineral notes that segue into a finish of black pepper and bitter espresso.

U.S.: \$11.72 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

HVC CERRO MADURO ROBUSTO

Near black in appearance, this dark robusto has a significantly earthy core framed by complex notes of chicory coffee, cloves and licorice.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ROMEO Y JULIETA 1875 NICARAGUA

This oily robusto burns evenly, showing a mostly woody character with touches of graham cracker, milk chocolate and caramel. The finish hints of spice.

U.S.: \$6.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

E.P. CARRILLO CAPA DE SOL ROBUSTO ROYAL

Glue spots stain the wrapper of this robusto, but it draws and burns evenly. Sweet notes of butterscotch and chocolate frame an oaky core. The finish is spicy.

U.S.: \$8.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

GUARDIAN OF THE FARM ||

Woody, peppery notes stand out the most here, with some cedary undertones and a nutty finish. The robusto is fashioned with a three-seam cap and closed, uncut foot.

U.S.: \$8.70 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA PALINA NICARAGUA OSCURO ROBUSTO

The smoke of this dark robusto has the woody qualities of an oak wine barrel along with some toasty, leathery notes and vanilla finish.

U.S.: \$7.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, BRAZIL
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MY UZI WEIGHS A TON NIGHTCRAWLER

While this dark robusto is full of wood, spice and coffee bean, the dry finish offset the score.

U.S.: \$5.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MY FATHER LA OPULENCIA PETITE

The heavy earth and mineral notes of this cigar start out harsh and bitter but improve a bit with notes of coffee and black pepper.

U.S.: \$7.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

TOP SCORES, VALUES AND STRENGTH | BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 150



TOP SCORES

94 Room101 Farce It Is A Lonsdale

Dominican Republic • \$10.50 • Lonsdale • Medium-Full



93 Aladino Toro Honduras • \$11.00 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



93 Gran Habano La Conquista Gran Robusto Honduras • \$8.00 • Corona Gorda • Medium



93 Punch Diablo Scamp Nicaragua • \$7.19 • Corona Gorda• Full



92 Aging Room Quattro Nicaragua Espressivo Nicaragua • \$10.65 • Robusto • Medium-Full



92 Cornelius & Anthony Cornelius Lonsdale U.S.A. • \$13.50 • Lonsdale • Medium-Full



Eastern Standard The Cyprus RoomDominican Republic • \$12.00 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



92 La Relatos The First
Nicaragua • \$9.30 • Corona • Medium-Full



92 Partagás Serie D No. 4 Cuba • £21.80 • Robusto • Medium-Full



92 Punch Punch 48 Cuba • £20.25 • Corona Gorda • Medium

TOP VALUES



92 Joya Silver Corona Nicaragua • \$6.30 • Corona • Medium-Full



90 La Galera Habano Bonchero
Dominican Republic • \$5.10 • Corona • Medium-Full



90 New World Cameroon Selection Churchill Nicaragua • \$6.50 • Churchill • Medium



90 Padrón Ambassador Maduro Nicaragua • \$5.90 • Lonsdale • Medium-Full



Arturo Fuente Cuban CoronaDominican Republic • \$5.36 • Corona • Medium-Full

MILDER CIGARS

90 Kristoff Connecticut Churchill

Dominican Republic • \$8.95 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

89 Davidoff Grand Cru No. 2
Dominican Republic • \$17.50 • Corona • Mild-Medium

Montecristo White Especial No. 1
Dominican Republic • \$10.79 • Lonsdale • Mild-Medium

87 Macanudo Café Baron de Rothschild Dominican Republic • \$8.29 • Lonsdale • Mild

The Griffin's No. 200

Dominican Republic • \$11.30 • Lonsdale • Mild

MEDIUM-BODIED CIGARS

92 Saint Luis Rey Herfing Exclusivo Medio Oriente
Cuba • Lebanon: \$17.00 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full

91 601 Blue Label Maduro Robusto
Nicaragua • \$8.00 • Robusto • Medium-Full

91 Arturo Fuente Don Carlos No. 2
Dominican Republic • \$12.85 • Figurado • Medium

91 H. Upmann Corona Major (Tubo)
Cuba • £17.30 • Corona • Medium-Full

91 La Flor Dominicana 1994 Mambo
Dominican Republic • \$8.80 • Churchill • Medium

STRONGER SMOKES

92 Black Label Trading Co. Last Rites Petite Lancero Nicaragua • \$10.00 • Lonsdale • Full

91 Timeless Panamericana Epicure
Nicaragua • \$11.50 • Robusto • Medium-Full

91 Viaje Exclusivo Nicaragua Leaded Robusto Nicaragua • \$9.20 • Robusto • Full

90 Diamond Crown Julius Caeser Pyramid
Dominican Republic • \$18.45 • Figurado • Medium-Full

90 Herrera Esteli Habano Lonsdale Deluxe Nicaragua • \$9.28 • Corona • Medium-Full

Great Places And Ways To Light Up



CORONA CIGAR I ORLANDO. FL

Millions of cigars, hundreds of whiskeys and one-of-a-kind experiences!

Enjoy three Orlando locations offering exclusive cigars, authentic Florida Sun Grown tobacco and private barrel whiskeys.

coronacigar.com



Discover rare and exclusive cigars in our bespoke vault. Personalize cigar boxes and accessories, or relax in our luxurious lounge. Davidoff of Geneva since 1911 is your passport to a cigar world above the ordinary. This is quality time, elevated.

Atlanta • Houston • New York • Las Vegas • Tampa

davidoffgeneva.com



NEPTUNE CIGARS | SOUTH FLORIDA

Thousands of cigars and accessories plus a friendly, knowledgeable staff, in multiple locations in beautiful S. Florida: Miami, South Beach and Fort Lauderdale, near S. Florida's best attractions. Come see why we're the premier cigar superstore for aficionados the world over.

neptunecigar.com



SHELLY'S BACK ROOM | WASHINGTON, D.C

A distinguished assortment of fine cigars and whiskeys, a state-of-the-art continuous fresh -air system, eight HD TVs, complimentary Wi-Fi, a seasonal outdoor café, and lunch, dinner and late-night menus make Shelly's a D.C. legend! Located two blocks from the White House.

shellysbackroom.com



SOHO CIGAR BAR | MANHATTAN. NY

Eat. Drink. Smoke . . . Indoors! Relax and enjoy flights and pairings from our curated selection of 150 world-class whiskeys and premium cigars. Then indulge yourself with any of our artisanal, crafted appetizers. Your table awaits.

sohocigarbar.com



PETER JAMES LEATHER CO.

The original, handmade cigar case for Aficionados by Aficionados. We didn't compromise quality, why should you?

peterjames.ca

Visit greatplacestolightup.cigaraficionado.com for more information and exclusive offers To Advertise Contact: Barry Abrams • 212-684-4896 babrams@mshanken.com

A TASTING OF VINTAGE CIGARS





97 QUAI D'ORSAY IMPERIALES (1986)

This is a spectacular, well-aged Churchill with a beautiful, brownish-red wrapper. The burn and draw are absolutely perfect. At the outset, there's a touch of light, bitter cocoa and earthiness on the front of the palate, and then as it warms up, the mid-palate turns to black pepper with a soft, smooth earthy finish. This 33-year-old cigar still has plenty of life left. — Gordon Mott



94 LA GLORIA CUBANA SOBERANO (CIRCA 1990)

This thick, eight-inch-long smoke was rolled in Miami, back when La Gloria Cubana was a tiny brand made in a small factory in Little Havana. The wrapper is toothy, with dots of plume, and despite being close to 30 years old, the cigar has plenty of flavor. It's rich and earthy, with notes of German chocolate, a bit of coconut and a nutty finish. A medium-bodied, pleasant taste of the past. —David Savona



94 PARTAGÁS PARTAGÁS DE PARTAGÁS NO. 1 (1995)

This is an old-school lonsdale, a slim and elegant smoke that is no longer part of the Partagás portfolio. The wrapper has that reddish colorado hue that's so alluring, and it has a fine draw. Floral at first, the old smoke takes some time to wake up. When it does, it has the flavor of a cup of cappuccino, creamy and rich with a smattering of cinnamon. Well made, elegant and beautifully balanced. —David Savona





HABANO
CAMEROON
CONNECTICUT
MADURO







The home of Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta and so many other brands is among the largest cigar factories in the world

ou'd think the largest cigar factory in the Dominican Republic—perhaps the largest in the world—would have at least a bit of ornamentation on its façade: A series of arches to underscore importance. Columns to project power. Or maybe even decorative ironwork to show prosperity. But Tabacalera de Garcia, located just outside the Casa de Campo resort complex of La Romana, Dominican Republic, doesn't boast any particular architectural style. The exterior is as non-descript and free of affect as any building you'd find in an industrial park in the United States. If not for the sign outside the security gate, you'd have no idea that you were standing in front of one of the most important cigar operations in the world.

"Earthquakes," says Javier Elmudesi as he walks past some workers digging up a pipe outside, near a cement sidewalk. He's the industrial affairs director for this massive operation and oversees most of what goes on here, from tobacco inventory to water issues. "Little earthquakes. We just started getting them about a few months ago and they can damage the pipes. Once we lose water pressure in a part of the factory, we know a pipe has burst."

Elmudesi glances at the ditch-diggers toiling in the hot morning sun, and moves on, circling back around the side of the building to an unremarkable entrance. Is it the front of the building? The lack of design makes it difficult to tell front from back, but no matter. Elmudesi isn't trying to get Tabacalera de Garcia into the pages of *Architectural Digest*.

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER GARRITANO









A special announcement from the editors of Cigar Aficionado



Dear Cigar Lover:

Cigar Insider, an e-newsletter from the editors of Cigar Aficionado, is brand new—beautiful design, mobile-friendly and still features cigar ratings you won't find anywhere else!

Twice a month, we'll send you:

- Vertical brand tastings—reviews of entire lines of cigars, showing you how different sizes perform.
- Helpful cigar photos illustrating size and strength.
- Previews of the top-rated cigars coming in future issues of Cigar Aficionado. Be the first to read about the best cigars.
- Interviews with intriguing cigarmakers and tobacco growers from around the world.
- News about the cigar industry.
- · Ratings of rare cigars.

My best,

Marvin R. Shanken



Take the next issue of Cigar Insider with you on your next cigar shopping expedition!

Sign up today at CIGARINSIDER.COM

He's more concerned with keeping such storied brands as Montecristo and Romeo y Julieta just as relevant today as they ever were.

Inside, Elmudesi paces through a corridor past a photo of himself hanging on the wall. As far as bosses go, he definitely looks the part. He's a big guy by almost any standard, with slicked-back hair and an expression that goes from jovial to serious in an instant. Today, it's all business as he walks through another doorway, parting a curtain of clear vinyl strips that barely touch the floor. They're the type of clear strips you might see in a walk-in freezer, only these have yellowed from years of tobacco exposure. Fifty years to be precise. Tabacalera de Garcia celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and in those five decades it has grown into the largest premium cigar factory in the Dominican Republic, and one of the largest anywhere in the world.

The air, abuzz with action, carries with it the scent of aged tobacco. If you've never smelled it, the aroma registers sweet, somewhere between honey and raisins, but each whiff is also haunted with raw undertones of vegetation and earth. And the smell here is inescapable. This factory rolls some 33 to 35 million cigars each year by hand, with rolling tables that extend back as far as the eye can see. The facility also makes cigars by machine, an operation that runs 24 hours a day, with more than one billion mass-market cigars produced here annually, most of them Backwoods. Many of the handmade cigars, about 20 million, are Montecristos and Romeo y Julietas. Other brands made here include H. Upmann, Por Larrañaga, Don Diego, VegaFina and

Henry Clay. This one factory is singularly responsible for nearly 30 percent of all the handmade Dominican cigars shipped to the United States.

Making so many cigars requires an enormous, well-managed workforce. There are 5,000 people who keep Tabacalera de Garcia running, with 900 making handmade cigars alone (400 bunchers and 500 rollers who apply the wrapper). It also requires immense inventories of premium tobacco, with some \$150 million worth in storage. Much of it is grown here in the Dominican Republic, but a lot comes from all over the world: Ecuador, Mexico, Cameroon, Indonesia, Nicaragua and the United States—a veritable United Nations of tobacco leaf. The factory is the heart of cigar production for Tabacalera USA, the American arm of tobacco giant Imperial Brands PLC, of Great Britain.

"Tabacalera de Garcia combines the best of both worlds," says Javier Estades, president and chief executive officer of Tabacalera USA. "On one hand, it has managed to maintain all the tradition





The sorting room is an expansive operation where tobacco is separated by size and color.

of crafting a truly premium cigar by hand. But it has also incorporated modern processes to assure we produce outstanding cigars with the highest quality. We keep a significant inventory of tobacco giving us flexibility to age our cigars." Estades is a slim, blondehaired Spaniard, put in charge of the U.S. operations of this company back in 2011. Under his guidance, the company has made notable changes to packaging and blends, releasing several high-scoring smokes. If there's one thing he wants to make clear, it's that staff members work together.

"I do not believe so much in functions or departments, but in teams," Estades insists. "This is especially important given our industry. Developing a cigar requires the highest level of knowledge, passion and dedication available. We use the best experts in

each area. To produce a successful cigar, it takes the ability to understand what the adult consumer demands, and then working with those experts who can make it happen."

Montecristo and Romeo have become Tabacalera de Garcia's flagship brands, and now come in myriad varieties, but this wasn't always the case. When the facility opened in 1969 it was a modest tobacco sorting operation dealing primarily in the mild Connecticut shade wrapper that was so popular at the time. The factory was owned by Gulf and Western Industries Inc. through its subsidiary, Consolidated Cigar Corp. Being the corporate conglomerate it was, Gulf and Western owned a huge portfolio of business holdings, and that included a sugar growing and processing operation in the Dominican Republic, as well as the entire Casa de Campo resort complex in La Romana. This is the same Gulf and Western that owned the famed film studio Paramount Pictures. Despite its collection of blue-chip holdings (too numerous to list), the company also invested heavily in the Dominican Republic.

The factory made its first handmade brands in 1972, Primo del Rey being one of them, followed by H. Upmann and Por Larrañaga a few years later. Back in the early '70s—a time when the Dominican Republic was not the cigar-producing powerhouse it is today—the factory was only making 500,000 cigars per year.

The timeline of Tabacalera de Garcia and its flagship brands is one of transitions, acquisitions and mergers. By the 1980s, Gulf and Western was looking to divest itself of sugar and tobacco. It pulled out of the Dominican Republic and sold Consolidated (and with it, Tabacalera de Garcia) to billionaire Ron Perelman for



very area in the factory has its own ecosystem and every employee plays a vital part. In the sorting room, women separate tobacco in virtual silence, arranging each specimen by color and by size. Each leaf has a classification, and all are neatly arranged in ceremonious piles.

Contrast this to the moisturizing or "conditioning" room, a damp, foggy chamber where tobacco is piled in shaggy heaps. This is where workers, most of them men, unpack tobacco that's been aging in storage for years and revive it by running it all under hissing sprays of mist, one handful of tobacco at a time.

A flaw at any stage will show itself in the final product, and the first cigar has to perform like the 11 millionth. With a handmade product, that's easier said than done, but consistency has been the key element at Tabacalera de Garcia for five decades.

"Some things may have become more efficient over the years," Elmudesi allows. "We keep much better records now of daily activities, but the process hasn't changed much. What has changed are the types of cigars people are smoking. So much of what we make now is full-bodied. And much thicker too."

He picks up a thick log of a cigar off a rolling table. Plump and hefty, the cigar must be at least 60 ring gauge, maybe 70. He holds it up to make his point: "Ten years ago, we had maybe one size that was 60 ring gauge. Now, we have so many."

The rollers here have daily quotas and you can tell by their

"Developing a cigar requires the highest level of knowledge, passion and dedication."—Javier Estades, president of Tabacalera USA

\$118 million in 1984. The company was bought and sold repeatedly: In 1988 a management team bought Consolidated from Perelman for \$138 million, then in 1993 Perelman bought it back for \$188 million. Six years later, Perelman sold it to French tobacco giant SEITA for \$733 million. SEITA later merged with Spain's Tabacalera S.A., creating Altadis S.A., and Consolidated Cigar was renamed Altadis U.S.A.

Altadis, and by extension, Tabacalera de Garcia, was to change hands once again. In July 2007, British tobacco giant Imperial Brands PLC acquired Altadis S.A. for

16.2 billion euros (\$22.4 billion). This put Imperial in a unique spot, as Altadis S.A. also owned 50 percent of Cuban cigar monopoly Habanos S.A. Buying Altadis meant buying half of Habanos, placing Imperial in both the Cuban and non-Cuban sectors.

Tabacalera de Garcia started making Montes in 1984, and Romeo y Julieta arrived after the creation of Altadis.



Top: These cigars have been sorted for color consistency. Bottom: Cigar boxes get a paint job at a separate facility nearby.

concentration that they take this task seriously—and why not? The incentives are strong. Each roller gets a base pay, but if they exceed the quota, they get more money.

The weight of Tabacalera de Garcia's reputation and its brands doesn't lie on Elmudesi's shoulders alone. He has an elite group of right-hand men with specialized knowledge of tobacco and the cigarmaking process known as the Grupo de Maestros, all of whom have spent decades in the factory: Victor Avila, who has been at Tabacalera de Garcia for 45 years, Nestor Rodriguez (40 years), Carlos Travieso (45 years)

and Pedro Ventura (22 years), who is also the manager of premium handmade operations. They are all instrumental in formulating new brands. Both Elmudesi (25 years) and Ventura report to an even larger overseer: factory manager Dr. Regine Wolfgramm. And yet, even she reports to Tabacalera de Garcia's manufacturing division. In corporate hierarchies, everyone has a boss.



These stewards of Tabacalera de Garcia ensure quality and consistency for the brands of Altadis. They stand in front of blend boxes on the factory floor. From left to right: Nestor Rodriguez, Pedro Ventura, Javier Estades, Javier Elmudesi, Rafael Nodal, Carlos Travieso and Victor Avila.

Another cast member is Yasemin Ozoncul, head of product development for cigar region. She's been with Imperial for more than a decade but moved to Tabacalera de Garcia in 2017.

And a frequent sight here is Rafael Nodal, the head of product capability for Tabacalera USA. Nodal, the dark-haired, bespectacled cigarmaker who created (and co-owns) the Aging Room cigar brand, has been tasked with creating new blends for the company, many that are rolled here.

"It is an important milestone in my career to work with the Grupo de Maestros," Nodal says. "Tabacalera de Garcia has carried out an important place in the history of premium cigars and creates blends with its unique and vast tobacco inventory."

With the confluence of teamwork, the factory continues to produce its core lines, which for many years were fairly mild and came in a few varieties. The Romeo y Julieta 1875, for example, is a staple for the factory and is the quintessential Dominican cigar in both body and character: Indonesian wrapper around an all-Dominican blend. Most likely, there will always be a market for this brand, which is mild to medium bodied. But as the company grew, and new leaders stepped in, those brands have evolved and expanded, with new blends for smokers who want stronger cigars.

Consider the full-bodied Romeo by Romeo y Julieta, a bold answer to the market's growing demand for more complexity and power. This magazine named its Piramide the No. 3 Cigar of 2012.

Montecristo is treated much the same way, with more traditional, milder lines such as the Classic and White Series, joined by stronger, more modern blends like the Monte by Montecristo:

Ecuador Habano wrapper, Dominican filler and two binders, Dominican and Nicaraguan. The Monte by Montecristo Jacopo No. 2 was named CIGAR AFICIONADO'S No. 9 cigar of 2014.

Occasionally, the factory's Grupo de Maestros will release limited-edition cigars called Private Batch, the most recent, a Dominican puro that's been aged for 10 years. Last summer the Grupo turned their attention to H. Upmann, a brand that tends to suffer from middle-child syndrome, and created the H. Upmann Grupo de Maestros Connecticut (89 points, Churchill).

So how does a cigar company celebrate 50 years? With, of course, a commemorative cigar, in this case the Montecristo Cincuenta. It comes in two formats: a 10-count box of Toros, or a 100-count humidor of box-pressed, No. 2 pirámides. The humidor is by Ellie Bleu, and the whole package retails for \$10,000, the humidor, naturally, accounting for most of the cost.

In the labyrinth of the factory, Elmudesi finds himself in the rolling gallery again. He walks over to a table and takes a finished cigar off the top to inspect it. Perhaps it's a mighty Montecristo or regal Romeo, or one of the other brands made here.

"You know, we have 300 workers here who've been with us for 20 years or more," he says with some satisfaction.

The roller, a young woman, continues to work as though he's not there. Elmudesi puts the cigar back down and then gently puts an appreciative hand on her shoulder before walking away to the next station. Without looking up, she cracks a smile, but then suppresses it and places another finished cigar on top of her rolling table. The day is almost over and there's a quota to fill. �

big smoke



Smoking At The Hard Rock

More than 1,000 people lit up at Cigar Aficionado's Big Smoke Florida by gregory mottola • photographs by zak bennett

t's almost impossible to miss—a giant, 450-foot guitar right off the highway rising out of Hollywood, Florida's flat landscape like a curvy, rock 'n' roll colossus. That huge guitar sits on the property of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. It's part of the casino's \$1.5 billion expansion project and when it's finished later this year, it will be a giant, guitar-shaped hotel and perhaps the world's largest monument to rock music. But on March 23, something just as exciting came to the Hard Rock in Hollywood—CIGAR AFICIONADO'S Big Smoke Florida. It's a cigar-filled evening where cigar fans get to meet the rock stars of the cigar world, and the star-power at Big Smoke celebrations is undeniable. More than 1,000 enthusiasts came to attend, from across the United States and from as far away as Australia, Romania and Canada.

"A show like this would never happen in Canada," said Joost Ueffing, who came from Halifax, Nova Scotia. José Timaros came from Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Dominican Republic, and flew in just for the show. Timaros brought eight of his friends and is a regular attendee of Big Smoke celebrations. He purchased standard tickets, which granted entry at 6:30 pm.

"Next year, I'm going to get the V.I.P. tickets," he said. Those will get him in an hour early before the crowds.

Every CIGAR AFICIONADO Big Smoke has its own feel, vibe and personality no matter the city, though all have one thing in common—a superlative selection of cigars and a festive environment where people are given the freedom to enjoy their smokes, not to mention the rare opportunity to meet the cigarmakers who created them. And, in keeping with the Big Smoke theme, it's one of those rare times when almost every maker of premium, handmade cigars is in the same room. You're just as likely to run into cigar stars like Litto Gomez of La Flor Dominicana,



Shannon Quigley and Michael Marin enjoy their cigars and drinks outdoors in the garden-like atmosphere of the Hard Rock during the event.



University of Miami football head coach Manny Diaz at the Big Smoke with Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine.



Rico Cortez, Norman Bell and Clarence Watkins play a traditional game of dominoes while smoking cigars and sipping their drinks.



Care for a Bacardí Cuatro Presidente? Maybe a Bacardí Ocho Mai Tai? These were some of the swanky cocktails poured at the Big Smoke.

Ernesto Perez-Carrillo of EPC Cigar Co. and Jorge Padrón of Padrón Cigars as you are to shake hands with Rocky Patel of Rocky Patel Premium Cigars, Alan Rubin of Alec Bradley or Pete Johnson of Tatuaje.

You might see Jaime or Pepín Garcia of My Father Cigars while getting a cocktail or Cynthia Fuente-Suarez and Liana Fuente behind the Fuente booth taking photos with their devoted fans. They were all there, as were industry heavyweights like Javier Estades of Tabacalera USA, the giant company responsible for the Montecristo and Romeo y Julieta brands, and Rick Rodriguez, the ambassador for General Cigar's CAO brand.

Rafael Nodal was happy to talk about his Aging Room Nicaragua cigar and Nestor Andrés Plasencia, the tobacco grower to the stars, was there, as was Nick Melillo, Mike Giannini, Eric Newman, Juan Martínez, Abe Flores and others.

If this sounds like a giant cigar lounge where nearly every cigar star in the industry is present, it's because that's exactly what it is. Not only was everyone free to smoke inside the Hard Rock's ballroom, but there was also a beautiful, tropical-themed outdoor garden with live entertainment, more cocktail bars and even more room to relax and enjoy a cigar.

As an almost necessary complement, spirits were poured all night long, and the list included Bacardí, Bird Dog Whiskey, Calumet Farm Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey, Cardenal Mendoza, Dewar's, D'Ussé, Glengoyne, Hennessy, Grand Brulot, Santa Teresa 1796 and Tamdhu.

Bacardí brought mixology to the Big Smoke, setting up two cocktail bars where teams of capable bartenders were shaking and stirring all night long. Drinks ranged from new, modern interpretations like the Bacardí Cuatro Presidente (rum, vermouth,



Liana Fuente is happy to hand off a special Rosado Sungrown Magnum R. This particular Arturo Fuente cigar size is only available at events.



Big Smoke Florida guests were able to smoke both inside the Hard Rock's ballroom as well as outdoors, while sampling new and classic cocktails.



Kyle Farling shows off his bag of smokes along with Tracy Berryman, Richie "Riot" Otero of PDR Cigars and Ashley Sckerman.



Foundation Cigars owner Nick Melillo opens a new box of Wise Man Maduros before handing one out to an eager enthusiast at his booth.

dry Curaçao, Angostura bitters) to canonic classics like the Vesper Martini of James Bond or the simple delight of a Dewar's original highball. In the garden, Dewar's Scotch had its own pouring station, as did Hatuey Cuban-style beer. In true bacchanal style, you could drink as much as you wish.

Avid cigar smoker Steve Silvers of Tampa, Florida was heading to a music festival in Miami, but figured he'd stop in at the Big Smoke on his way.

"I've been smoking for 30 years—it's an amazing event," he said, while puffing on a CAO Flathead 660 Carb, a large, box-pressed smoke given out by General Cigar. The smoke was named No. 3 Cigar of 2015 by CIGAR AFICIONADO, with a rating of 95 points.

The cigars handed out during the evening included Aging Room, Alec Bradley, Archetype by Ventura, Arturo Fuente, Balmoral Añejo XO, CAO, El Centurion from My Father Cigars, E.P. Carrillo, Diamond Crown, H. Upmann, Hamlet Paredes, Joya de Nicaragua, Illusione Fume d'Amour, La Aroma de Cuba, La Flor Dominicana, Micallef, Montecristo, Nat Cicco, Nub, Oliva, Padrón, Plasencia Cosecha 146, PDR, Rocky Patel, Tatuaje, The Wise Man Maduro, Timeless Prestige, Undercrown and Vegas Cubanas from My Father Cigars.

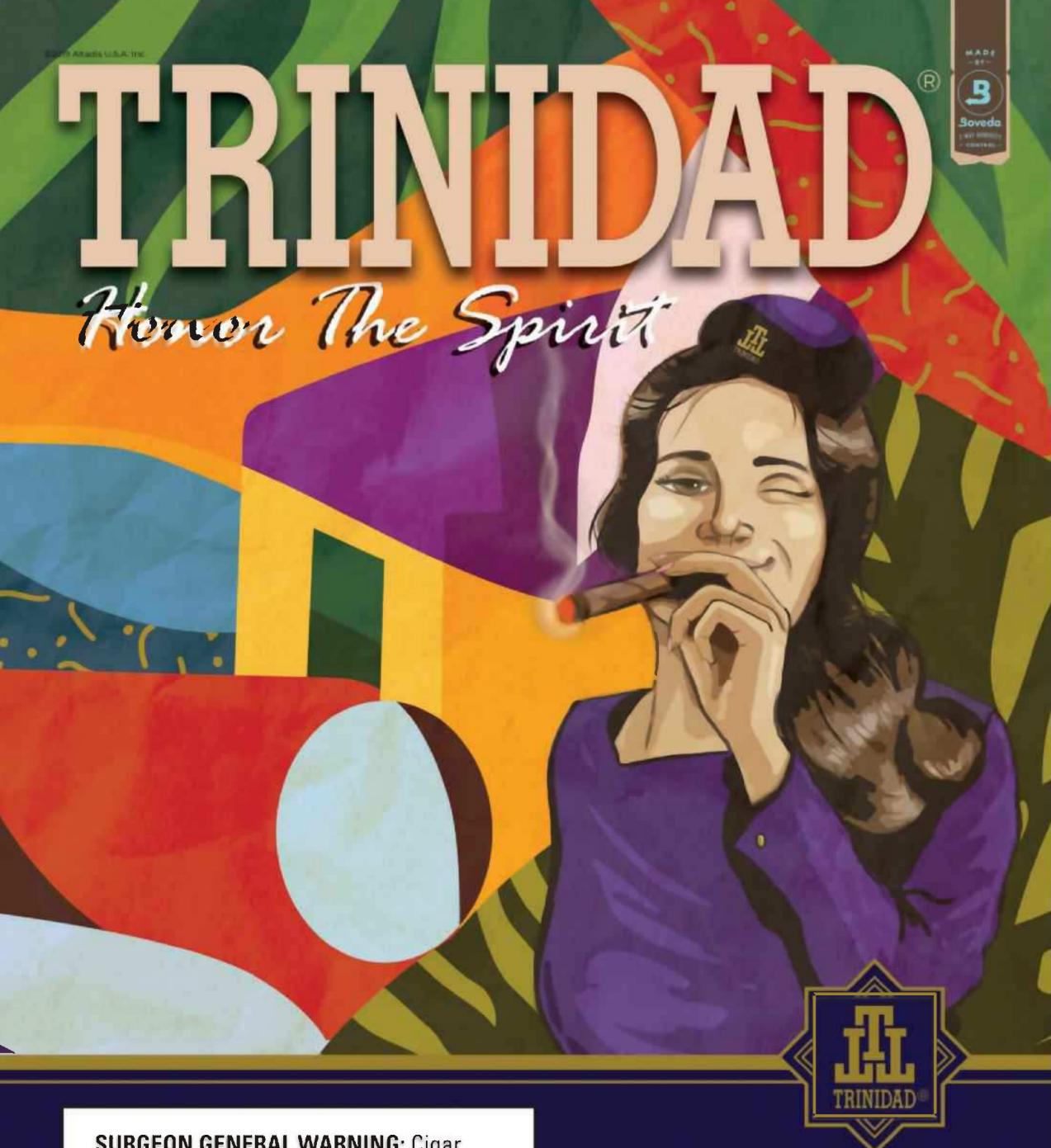
To make sure that all the cigars stayed in fresh smoking condition, Boveda handed out large, humidified bags capable of holding every smoke of the evening. Rabbit Air showed off some of its smoke-cleaning machines.

The food at the Hard Rock was as plentiful as the cigars and drinks. Sausages and flank steaks roasted on open-fire grills the entire evening while servers at carving stations piled up as much beef as a plate could hold. And multitiered islands of charcuterie, cheese and sliders were as artfully arranged as the deserts.

The Seminole Hard Rock is located roughly 20 minutes away from the Fort Lauderdale Airport and a half-hour from Miami International. The resort offers gambling with slot machines, table games and poker, fine and casual dining, a 4 1/2-acre, lagoon-style pool, spa and more. That evening, temperatures hovered in the high 70s.

"It's a beautiful event," said Jorge Padrón, one of the rock stars of the evening. "I hope you do it here again." ❖

The next Big Smoke takes place November 15–17 in Las Vegas. Visit *TheBigSmokes.com* for more information.



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale.

ESPIRITU™

www.TrinidadEspirituMusic.com

Trinidadcigars_usa



Give Him a Gift for Father's Day That Shows Your Good Taste



Father's Day Special: Second Gift is Free!

cigaraficionado.com/fathersday

or Call 800-752-7799

Habanos Day

Cuba brings the cigar show on the road to educate and entertain cigar lovers around the world by Gordon mott

By 4 p.m. at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City, people were lining up outside the bunker-like entrances waiting for the doors to open. The crowd continued to build throughout the afternoon and by the start of the first seminars and tastings around 5:30 there were more than 1,500 people inside, gathered for Mexico's sixth edition of Habanos Day.

Habanos Day is a celebration of Cuban cigars and rum along with tributes to Cuba's musical and artistic culture. The events have been used for a variety of celebrations, such as the launch of new limited-edition Cuban cigars, welcoming a Cuban ambassador to their new post or just providing a series of cigar tastings and seminars for appreciative fans. Handmade Cuban cigars have been paired with spirits, coffee and even chocolate, and the seminars have covered a variety of topics, everything from cigar rolling to presentations by cigar historians and tobacco experts.

The first Habanos Day took place more than 15 years ago, in Italy. That 2003 show was based on a popular French event for cigar lovers, and brought together members of Italy's top cigar clubs. Habanos S.A. seized on the idea as a way to promote Cuban cigars, and within a few years, the event had spread to both Russia and Portugal. At the fourth Habanos Day in Germany, in 2014, attendees celebrated the 84th birthday of noted cigar industry executive Heinrich Villiger, and smoked two Regional Edition cigars from Canada and Asia Pacific not usually available in Germany. In 2015, Monaco used the occasion of Habanos Day to introduce the H. Upmann Magnum 56 Edición Limitada to that market. Habanos Days have also been held in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Argentina, Estonia and Costa Rica.

While most of the Habanos Days are limited to between 200 and 300 people, Mexico's Habanos Days have become a huge event, drawing more than 1,000 cigar lovers for the past several years. This year, more than 1,500 attended. The event served as the official launch of the new Mexican Regional



A happy patron holds up a hefty Montecristo Linea 1935 Leyenda at Mexico's Habanos Day.

Edition cigar, the Punch Duke, and the introduction of the new Havana Club special-edition rum, Tributo 2019. In honor of the Punch cigar's historical literary and circus themes, the embassy was decked out with brightly colored balloons, while the walls were adorned with pictures of former Cuban president Fidel Castro.







One part social and one part educational, Habanos Day also featured the release of the Punch Duke.

"Everyone who is here is a cigar lover," said Max Gutmann, one of the original creators of the La Casa del Habano retail concept, and the principal behind IEPT, the local Habanos distributor, which bears most of the costs for the night. "Everyone always wants to learn more about Cuban cigars, the history, the way they are produced and how they are smoked and the way they mix with different drinks. You always learn something when you come here. It's been growing every year."

As people filed into the large event space, a room with 20-foothigh ceilings, they received a small bag containing three small Cuban cigars: a Romeo y Julieta Coronitas en Cedro, a Punch Petit Coronations and a Quintero Tubulares. There were several bars serving Havana Club products, including Selección de Maestros, a booth from accessory maker Xikar and a Cuba travel kiosk with

information about traveling to the island. While entrance to the event was free, there were small breakout sessions that required a minimal fee, from \$5 to \$15. They included a demonstration on rolling cigars and a mixology seminar to promote different drinks paired with cigars. Adargelio Garrido, the longtime lawyer for Habanos who litigated the company's battle in the United States over the Cohiba trademark, gave a presentation about the history of the Cohiba brand. The evening's musical act was Primera Clase, a top Cuban band.

The centerpiece of the evening was a VIP-only tasting of the new Punch Duke, paired with the new release of Tributo 2019, a limited-edition Havana Club that has presented with vintage dates since 2016. This year's bottling was an homage to the master blenders at Havana Club, and to the art of blending with their creation of this particular rum. Only 2,500 bottles of Tributo 2019 will be released to the global market, with prices in most countries around \$400 to \$500 a bottle.

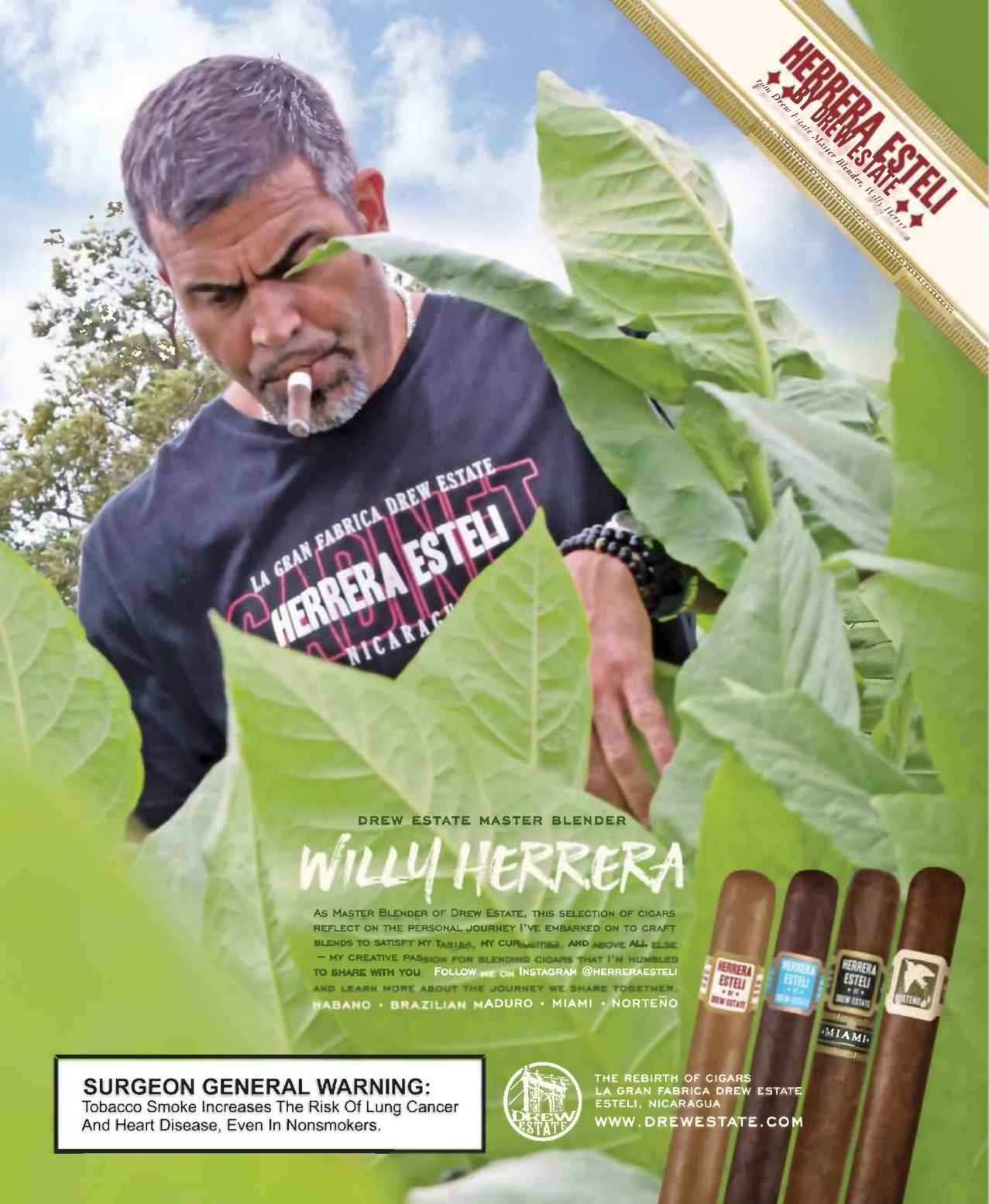
While this was the grand debut of the Duke, it's been sold in Mexico since January. The 5 1/2 inch by 54 ring gauge cigar is the fourth Mexican Regional cigar—the first three were sold under the Edmundo Dantes label. The Duke is a medium-bodied smoke with hints of leather and earth, and while still quite young, it shows a lot of aging potential. Asbel Morales, the top master blender from Havana Club and Manolo Santiago, a Habanos Sommelier from Mexico, conducted the tasting, and the pairing of the cigar and the rum.

"We never blend a rum without thinking about the marriage it will have with cigars," said Morales. "They are both elements of Cuban culture and they go together."

Morales said the Havana Club blenders often debate whether to taste the rum first and then light the cigar, or vice-versa. "We decided this year that it is better to light your cigar, and then taste the rum because the cigar brings out something in the rum."

The crowd was appreciative. "It's a piece of Cuba in Mexico," said George Diamandopoulos, a Mexican businessman who also owns several restaurants in the city. "For a cigar aficionado, honestly, I feel like I'm in Cuba. It's a chance to try new cigars. It's very hard to find anywhere in the world an experience like this, like you are in Cuba."

"You come here because you want to learn about cigars," said Julian Debarle, the general manager of Intercontinental Hotels in Mexico. "It's like wine—there is always something more to learn." •



moments to remember

Please send all submissions to: CIGAR AFICIONADO/Moments to Remember, Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10019. Or email them to: momentstoremember@mshanken.com. To order additional copies of CIGAR AFICIONADO, call 1-800-344-0763.



J.P. and Syndee Steelman of Longview, Texas, celebrate Syndee's upcoming college graduation from A&M University and her 22nd birthday at O'Neill's Pub in Dublin, Ireland, on St. Patrick's Day.



Best friends who have smoked cigars together for 25 years, Gary Johnson and father-of-the-bride Ed Paul share a fine smoke during his daughter's wedding at Tanque Verde Ranch in Tuscon, Arizona.



Radio personalities Dan Taylor and Joe Causi from WCBS 101.1 take a break from playing New York's greatest hits to discuss this year's Cigar of the Year.



Pam Minelli and her husband Richard Busto of Juniper Inlet Colony, Florida, catching some sun while on a dream cruise visiting Cuba.



Dr. Neal Bozentka, Château Mouton Rothschild managing director Philippe Dhalluin, Dr. Ken Fetter and Dr. David Bozentka enjoying Cohibas and tasting wine in Bordeaux at Château Mouton Rothschild.



Celebrating 100 years of age, WWII veteran Sgt. Raymond Navarro Sr. smokes his first cigar, a Montecristo Espada, with sons Richard, Raymond Jr. and Robert at the Broken V Ranch in Flatonia, Texas.



Frank Stallone, Ralf Möller, Steve Harvey and Daniel Marshall enjoy handmade cigars at the Beverly Hills Hotel in California.

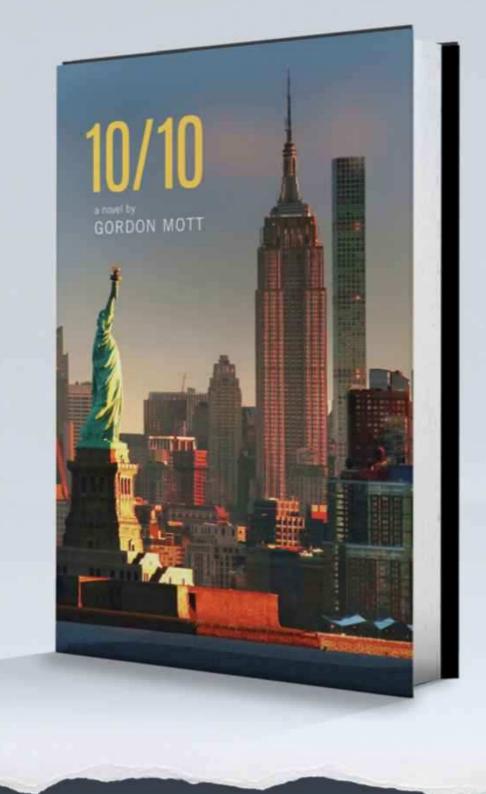


Childhood friends from Syracuse, New York, Rich Balamut, Bob Fandrich, Stan Klocek and Tom Baker reunite in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, over Cohiba cigars and fine whisky.



Lifelong friends Cordell Charleston, Kyle Edwards, Dwaine Waddell and Airren Dabney catch up the best way they know how: with some fine cigars and drinks.

Where were you on 9/11?



10/10 is a powerful narrative of what terror does to the lives of four suburban New Yorkers caught in a 9/11-like attack. The thriller explores the split-second decisions made in the heat of the moment, and how the consequences of their choices destroy lives and upend our pre-conceived notions about good and evil.

- CHRISTOPHER DICKEY

World News Editor, The Daily Beast, author of Our Man in Charleston

Pre-order the book now at **Amazon.com**

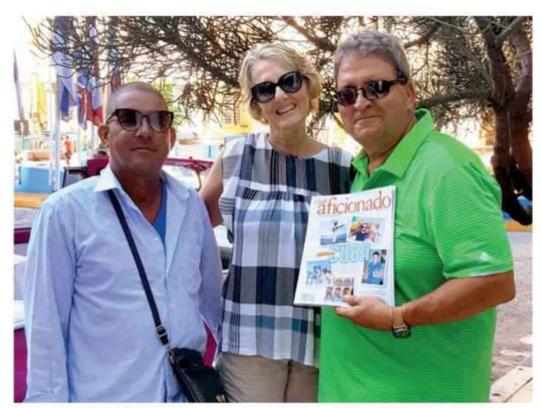




Good friends Sharkey Haddad and Ken Gutman celebrate 20 years of smoking cigars together while cruising down Woodward Avenue in Detroit, Michigan.

Father and son Paul and Parker Pawlusiak savor Padrón cigars while enjoying some quality time together boating on Lake Lapeer in Metamora, Michigan.





Craig and Laura Smith tour Cuba using CIGAR AFICIONADO as their guide. Here, they are checking out a vintage 1953 Chevy with their driver Jose Gomez.



Tony Shoulders Sr. rings in his 60th birthday with Rhonda Bernard, Roslyn Bernard, Tony Jr., Liz Santiago and Angelique Santiago in Memphis, Tennessee.



While on vacation in Cuba, Carolyn Luis, Emily Cimino and Elizabeth Luis venture outside Havana to a tobacco farm and light up local Cuban cigars.



Steve Lucas and his son David share a special bonding moment with Montecristo cigars in Costa Rica before David leaves for U.S. Army training.



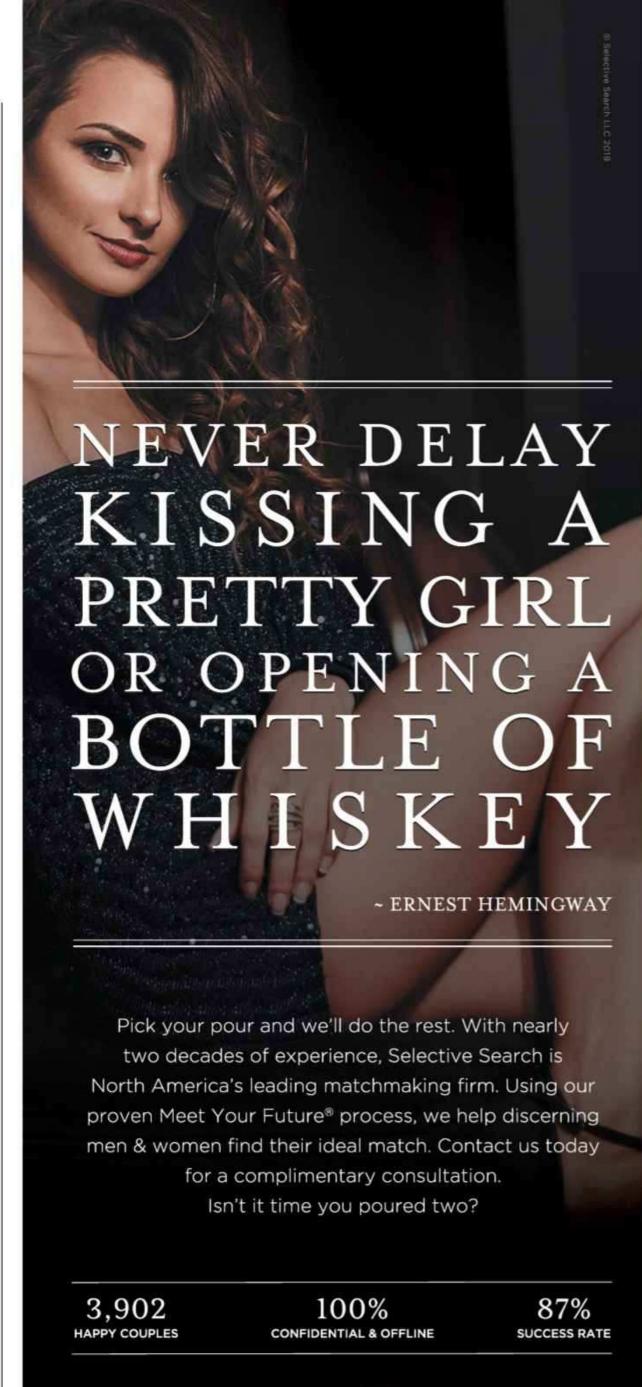
Brothers John, Owen and Eugene Bonfilio and Rowdy the dog celebrate Owen's 40th birthday with some Alec Bradley cigars in Scottsdale, Arizona.



Ryan Fournier, Jake Gagnon, Vanessa Reven and Roger Fournier Jr. make time for a smoke at a destination wedding in the Dominican Republic.



After the quail hunt, Curtis Arnold, Doug Hardman, George Arnold and Chuck Scott enjoy cigars and Port at the Rio Pedra Plantation in Georgia.





EXECUTIVE SEARCH MEETS PERSONAL MATCHMAKING

866.592.1200 selectivesearch.com info@selectivesearch.com





Scott Dwyer, Jamie Knowlton, Bill Tulloch, Steve Blank, Jeff Jones and Terry Linn on a ski trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Cigars have always been a staple in their trips around the world.



Andrew Davis from Seattle, Washington, and Tim Hughes from Wilmington, North Carolina, enjoy some Cuban Cohibas after a long day of surfing in Playa Hermosa, Costa Rica.



Sean, Mike and Joseph Blockberger, Fred McConnell (kneeling), Dennis Guzik, Bob and Sam Dixon, Rick Reese, Lou Marshal and Dave Bliss at the Invitational Pub Inspection & Survey in London.



Paul Santili from Chicago, Illinois, lights a Cuban Romeo y Julieta cigar as he takes in the view from the Great Wall of China.



Jim Peterson drove all the way from Massachusetts to Epping, New Hampshire, just to meet Ernesto Perez-Carrillo.



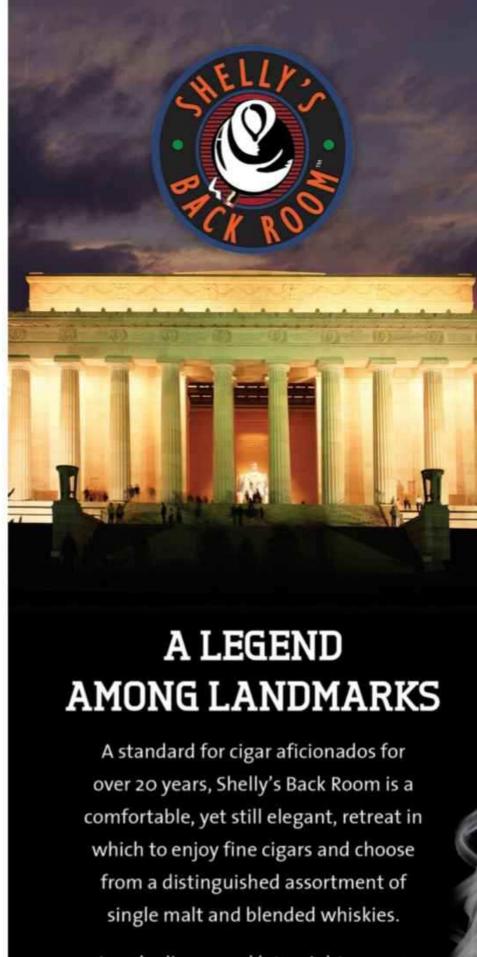
After their 18th annual Labor Day seafood party, the Wilkocz family slipped on their vintage smoking jackets and extended the celebration with My Father cigars in Jamison, Pennsylvania.



Jude Torchia of Denver Colorado enjoys a Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series cigar on the porch with his loyal companion, Bella.



Nick and Nikki Zaglifa share their first cigar moment as husband and wife in Paradise Valley, Arizona.



Lunch, dinner and late-night menus offer the perfect complement to your cigar smoking pleasure.

A new, state-of-the-art continuous fresh air system will make your visit to Washington's best cigar tavern even better!

Shelly's Back Room

1331 F. Street NW · Washington, D.C. 202.737.3003 • SHELLYSBACKROOM.COM









Clean Air Defined

Official air purifier of the International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers (IPCPR)



Effective. Quiet. Stylish
Air Purifiers

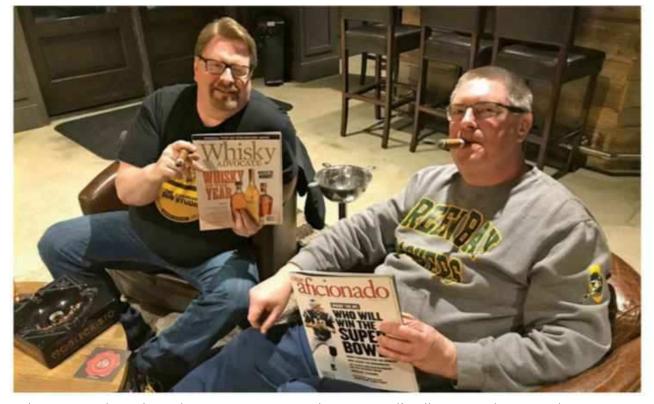
For a free catalog call
888.866.8862
www.rabbitair.com/smoke



Ted Creighton, Marshall Mosesson, Parimal Upadhyay, Tom Taylor, Brian Salay, Neil Spence, Frank Gilanelli and Larry Scharf sip some suds with their smokes in Westhampton, New Jersey.



Roy Azanzamendi, Anthony Falce, Steph Colon, Gyvis Santos, Mario Aviles, Orlando Rivera, Dominick D'Angelo and Elias Rosa gather in Brooklyn, New York, for Anthony's birthday.



What's a good smoke without some great reading material? Bill Sirny and Scott Briley enjoy Montecristo cigars at Casa de Montecristo in Mooresville, North Carolina.



Tony Tress, Mike Waddington, Richard Bowen, Reggie Gray, Mark Pollock, Josh Wheelock and Dave Jericho celebrate Josh's 30th birthday in Tampa, Florida.



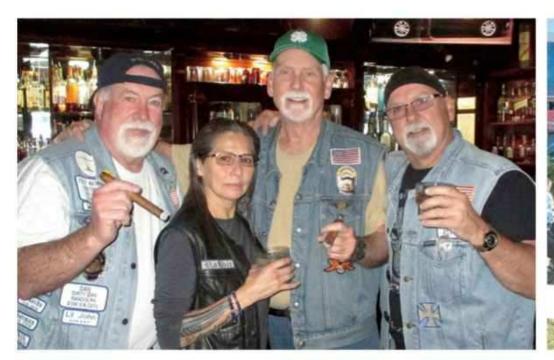
Cigar collectors Amir Saarony from Canada and James Wu from Hong Kong smoke with Gordon Mott and David Savona at the Meliá Cohiba in Havana.



Dr. Nekita Fuller, Kalif Fuller, Andre Fuller and Randy Fuller sport some elegant smoking jackets for New Year's Eve in Overland Park, Kansas.



John and Jack Sadowski spend some quality father-son time while enjoying locally made Rodriguez Cigars in Key West, Florida.



Retired officers Jim Fortier, Nancy Delgado, Ken Ward and David McCall at the Sharon and Peter Daly pregaming the Daytona 500 NASCAR Race with a few 888 Cigar Lounge in Fullerton, California, on Police Officer Appreciation Day.



cigars during their trip to Daytona Beach, Florida.

CIGAR AFICIONADO (ISSN #1063-7885) is published bimonthly by M. Shanken Communications, Inc., Worldwide Plaza, 825 Eighth Avenue, 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019. (212) 684-4224. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Address changes and subscription inquiries: CIGAR AFICIONADO, P.O. Box 37367 Boone, IA 50037-0367; call 1-800-365-4929; or email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com. Subscription rates: United States, \$24.95 per year; Canada, \$38.00 per year; all other foreign, \$56.00. Subscriptions are payable in U.S. funds. TO ORDER A NEW SUBSCRIPTION, call 1-800-792-2442, email cgacustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, or write to aforementioned Boone address. To order back issues, call 1-800-761-4099. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned, and no responsibility can be assumed for such material. All "Letters to the Editor" should be sent to the editor at the aforementioned New York address. All rights

in letters sent to CIGAR AFICIONADO will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and subject to CIGAR AFICIONADO's unrestricted right to edit. CIGAR AFICIONADO® is a registered trademark of M. Shanken Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted or reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the publisher. Copyright © 2019, M. Shanken Communications, Inc. To sell CIGAR AFICIONADO call: 1-800-344-0763.



made for you



In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

I SMOKES AFLOAT—METRICA NORTH AMERICA

So you've finally realized your lifelong dream of buying a super yacht and now you're wondering how to reconcile it with your other great passion: cigars. Metrica North America, the maker of bespoke, nautical furnishings, has you covered with its Reposo Column Nautic humidor. The brushed-steel base can be anchored, so your smokes aren't tossed about in the high seas. Features include self-monitoring, UVC sterilization and remote control via smartphone. *metrica.de/en/*

PIZZA COMES HOME—BREVILLE

When the dream is home-baked pizza, the hitch is hitting the high temps available in professional ovens. Breville's Pizzaiolo Pizza Oven delivers with 750°F, enough heat for the now trendy Neapolitan pie. The unit takes up the counter space of about two toaster ovens and is easy to use. Just turn the style dial to pick presets like MARGHERITA, NEW YORK, THIN AND CRISPY and FROZEN modes. After preheating, 12-inch pizzas will cook in about two minutes. You can even use the oven to char vegetables. *breville.com*

TEA-ING IT UP—TEA FORTÉ

Thinking about getting into tea drinking, but not sure how to approach it? Tea Forté, an importer of leafy brews from around the world, packages sampler sets that show the way. Our favorite is the collection of Assam black teas with the manly name Noir. It's meant as a gateway for coffee drinkers into the dark side of tea. The company also sells equipment like steeping cups for those who like loose leaf and offers packages designed for Mother's Day. teaforte.com

4 FIT TO BE TIED—WHISKERS LACES

Men looking to add a pop of color to their outfits have typically turned to ties, pocket squares and socks. But one company offers a new alternative: shoelaces. Whiskers Laces combine vibrant colors and more than 70 innovative designs to offer laces that complement any dress shoe or boot. Each shoelace comes in an easy-to-wrap wooden spool and is equipped with a premium metal aglet to prevent fraying. Available in boxes of five from \$15 to \$60. whiskerslaces.com

5 OUT OF THE PARK—SHOWBELTS

What sets baseball uniforms apart from other sports is the belts that bring the classy look together. Showbelts, by Nokona, the maker of baseball mitts, offers the same style to those who have left the diamond behind. Made with the company's glove leather, the belts are fully customizable from length and type of leather to color and buckle type. You can even choose the threading and the keeper, as well as the lining and edging. And if you're still playing—or even if not—you can personalize your belt with a number. showbelts.com

6 SOUND CONTROL—ZVOX AUDIO

You're in a crowded cigar bar trying to chat up a smoking lady in an end-of-the-world cocktail dress, but the clamoring gang at the next booth is drowning out your dialogue. Luckily, you have the VoiceBud VB20, a personal hearing device that tucks behind your ear and allows you to discretely and wirelessly control volume with an app on your smartphone. The NoiseBlocker technology cuts out the voices behind you and other features drown out the sound of the humming smoke filter and any sudden peaks in volume—in case a fight breaks out. <code>zvox.com</code>



BOLD START. VELVET FINISH.



Crown Royal

BLACK

MAYBE YOUR NEXT BOURBON SHOULD BE A TEQUILA.

Gran Patrón Piedra is crafted using the highest-quality 100% Weber Blue Agave and aged for up to four years in American and French oak barrels. It's this intricate process that delivers a rich and impeccably balanced taste with notes of wood and dried fruits. Bourbon drinkers, your tequila has arrived.





